» Honda's two-stroke race rep restored
» Andrea Coleman – a wild life in GPs
» Norton's 1928 race-winning roadster

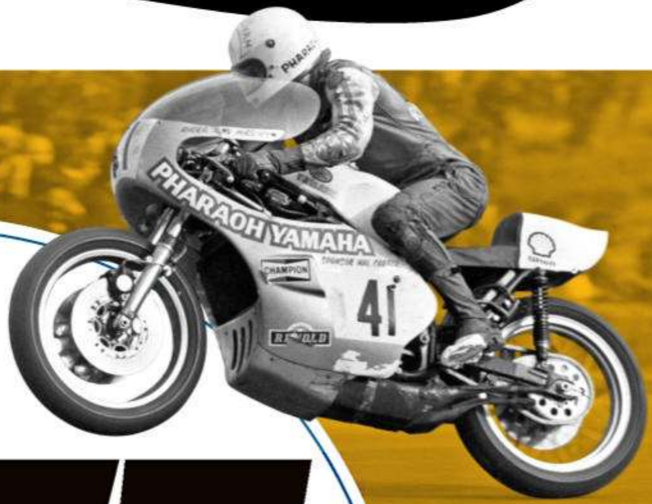
NEW LOOK

Classic Bike

Britain's biggest-selling classic magazine

JANUARY 2025
ISSUE #540 - £5.99

BUMPER 140-PAGE ISSUE



50th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE

1975

WITH: Roberts, Sheene, Johnny Cecotto, Dave Aldana's skeleton leathers, Avon Roadrunners & Martin Lampkin

Exhaust of the year

The compelling curves of the Honda 400 Four

Speedway revolution

How Weslake built a title winner

Rocket blasts off

Haslam's first big win at Cadwell Park

Electric start Brits

Triumph Trident & Norton Commando road test revisited

NEW WORKSHOP SECTION

Spark plugs: What you need to know + Tube-bending workshop tour + DIY frame straightening + Carburettor maintenance + Project Harris – it runs! (No, really, it does) + Brit bike clutch advice

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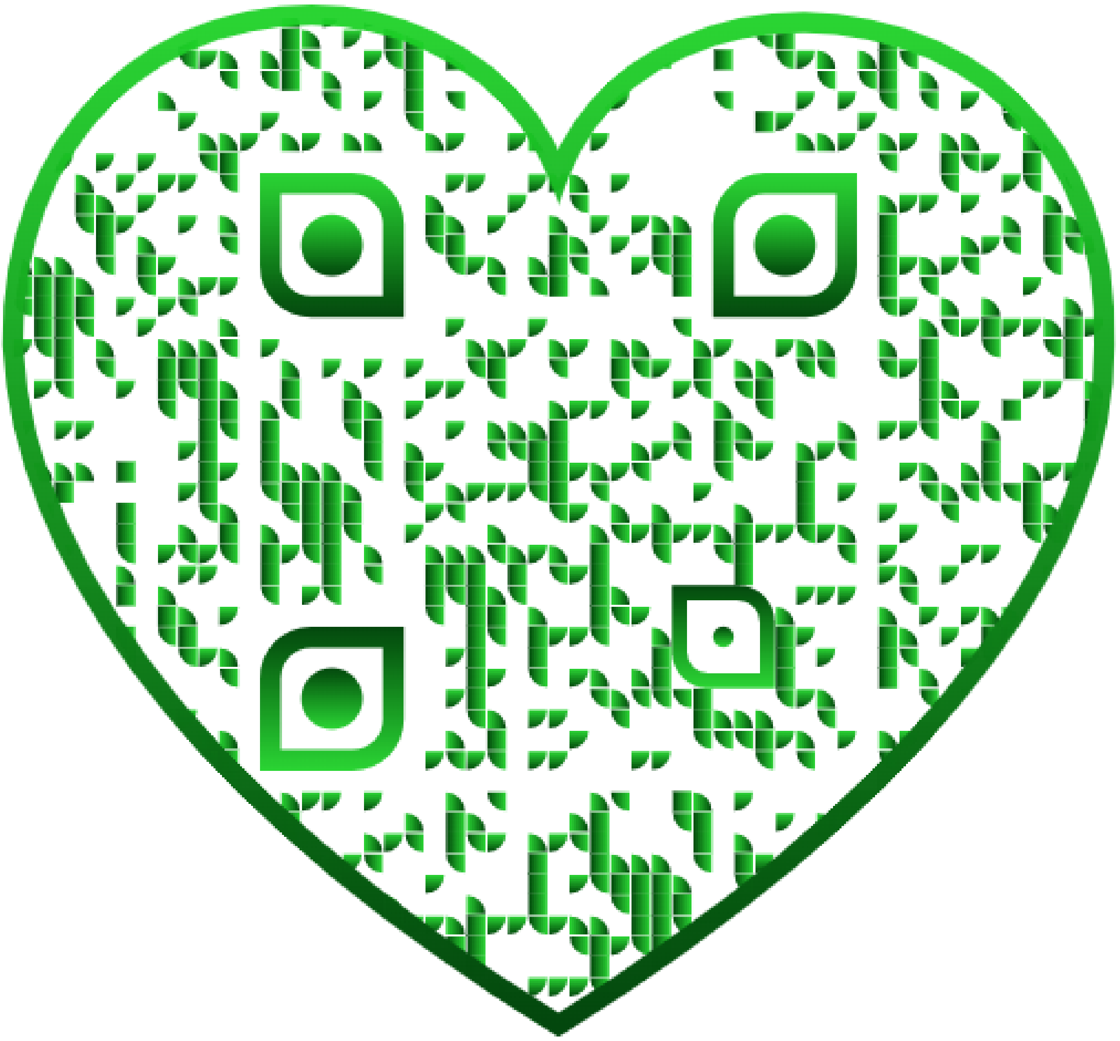

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January 2025 / #540

NEW LOOK

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At Lunch With...
▶ Andrea Coleman's life steeped in racing and motorcycle charity

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Workshop tour
▼ We savour the atmosphere at Raysons Exhausts' workplace

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1975 Special

400FOUR
HONDA

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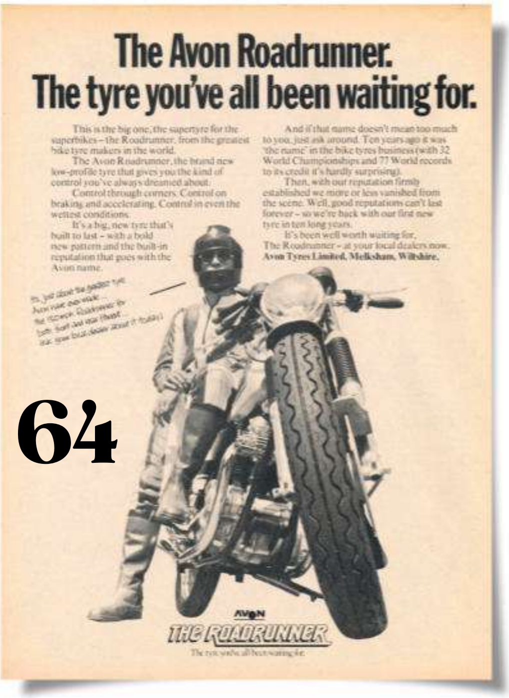
BAUER AUTOMOTIVE



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AVON TYRES LIMITED

1975 Special

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The middleweight with a masterpiece exhaust arrives

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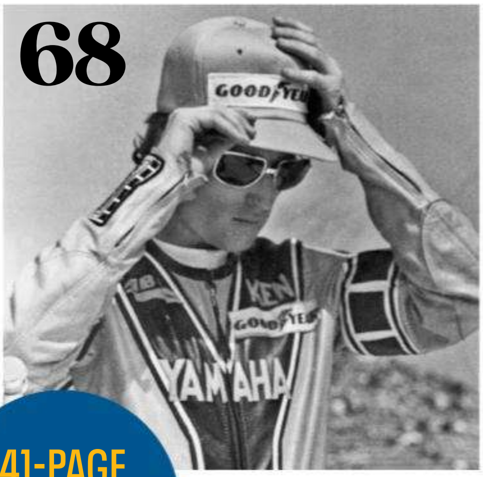

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Roadrunners arrive to take on Dunlop in the rubber stakes

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The Venezuelan whizz-kid who shook up top-flight racing

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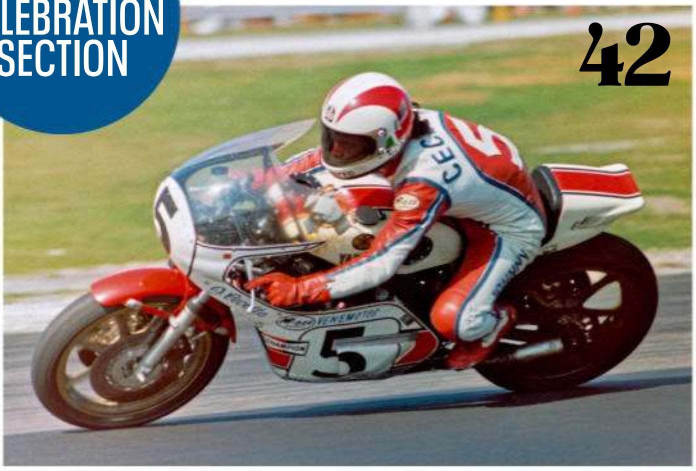

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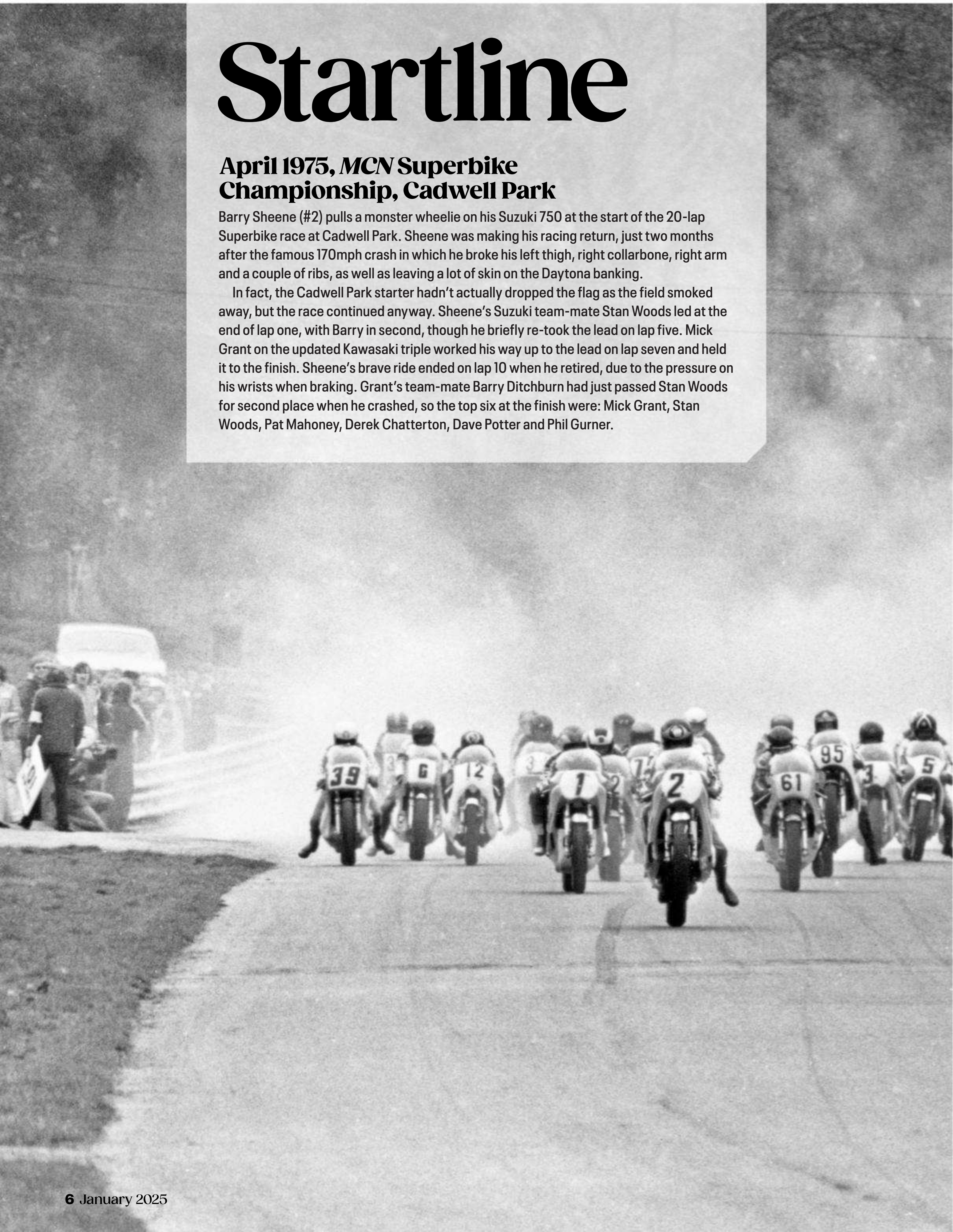
BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

Startline

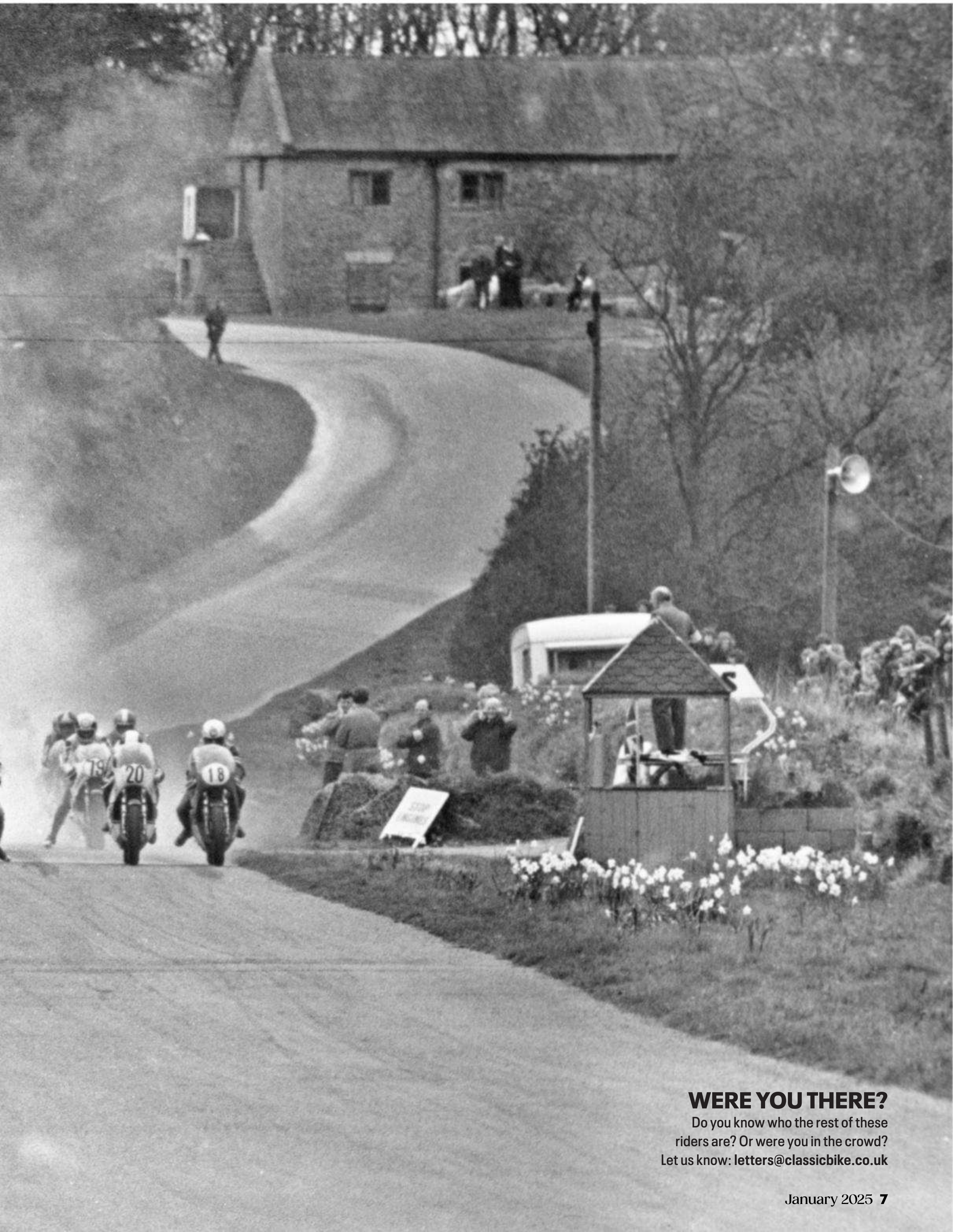


April 1975, *MCN* Superbike Championship, Cadwell Park

Barry Sheene (#2) pulls a monster wheelie on his Suzuki 750 at the start of the 20-lap Superbike race at Cadwell Park. Sheene was making his racing return, just two months after the famous 170mph crash in which he broke his left thigh, right collarbone, right arm and a couple of ribs, as well as leaving a lot of skin on the Daytona banking.

In fact, the Cadwell Park starter hadn't actually dropped the flag as the field smoked away, but the race continued anyway. Sheene's Suzuki team-mate Stan Woods led at the end of lap one, with Barry in second, though he briefly re-took the lead on lap five. Mick Grant on the updated Kawasaki triple worked his way up to the lead on lap seven and held it to the finish. Sheene's brave ride ended on lap 10 when he retired, due to the pressure on his wrists when braking. Grant's team-mate Barry Ditchburn had just passed Stan Woods for second place when he crashed, so the top six at the finish were: Mick Grant, Stan Woods, Pat Mahoney, Derek Chatterton, Dave Potter and Phil Gurner.

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE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STOP ENGINES

WERE YOU THERE?

Do you know who the rest of these riders are? Or were you in the crowd? Let us know: **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

ISSUE
#540

Letters

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Hello

This month we climb into the Tardis (piloted by Tom Baker as Doctor Who – you remember, the one with the hat and the scarf and the booming voice) and head back to 1975 for our celebration of what was happening 50 years ago.

Making these 50th anniversary issues has become an annual thing for *Classic Bike*. The idea is to create something a bit special to get you through Christmas and into the New Year, so hopefully you are reading this on the sofa, while stuffed with mince pies.

Putting them together is a real treat. We've spent hours with the 1975 bound volume of *Motorcycle News* and riffling through dusty filing cabinets, searching for pictures to find a story for every month of the year.

1975 was the year of Yamaha racing dominance, of the continued convulsions in the British motorcycle industry, of Barry Sheene's 170mph Daytona crash, the arrival of Honda's CB400 Four and Gold Wing, of the emergence of Johnny Cecotto and Ron Haslam, the disappearance of motorcycle front numberplates and a whole lot more. Hopefully we've picked the right stories.

Obviously the collapse of our domestic industry wasn't good, but the rest of the '70s were a great time for British motorcycling, with booming sales and huge crowds at road races, speedway and off-road events. No wonder we look back on it as a golden age, especially for those of us who were teenagers then, getting our first taste of motorised freedom and grappling with the mysteries of the two-stroke engine.

I was still at school in 1975, but had saved up money from a Saturday job and blew the whole lot (that's £125) on a Cotton Minarelli trials bike that I never really mastered, either as rider or mechanic – TUP 92K is still on the DVLA database, is it lurking in your shed?

What were you riding in '75? And have you got any photos? Write and tell us; we'd love to tell your stories in the magazine's Way We Were pages. And actually it doesn't matter if they aren't from '75. Let us see them anyway. Or drop us a line to tell us about a great event, good service or your plans for 2025.

Also in this issue, more tales from the workshop and an amazing interview with Andrea Coleman; her dad designed AMC racers, her brother was TT winner Peter Williams, she was married to Tom Herron and started the Riders For Health charity; oh yes, she has stories to tell.

Tomorrow I'm off to Rick's workshop with my BSA Bantam for a welding lesson, then I need to prep the Morini Camel for the Exeter Trial. After that, I'll start on the mince pies. Enjoy the issue.

Hugo Wilson, Editor

Contributors in this issue

Morini Riders Club

The energetic Morini Riders Club provided this month's report from the Italian autojumble at Novegro. morini-riders-club.com

Pages 22-27

Keith Lee

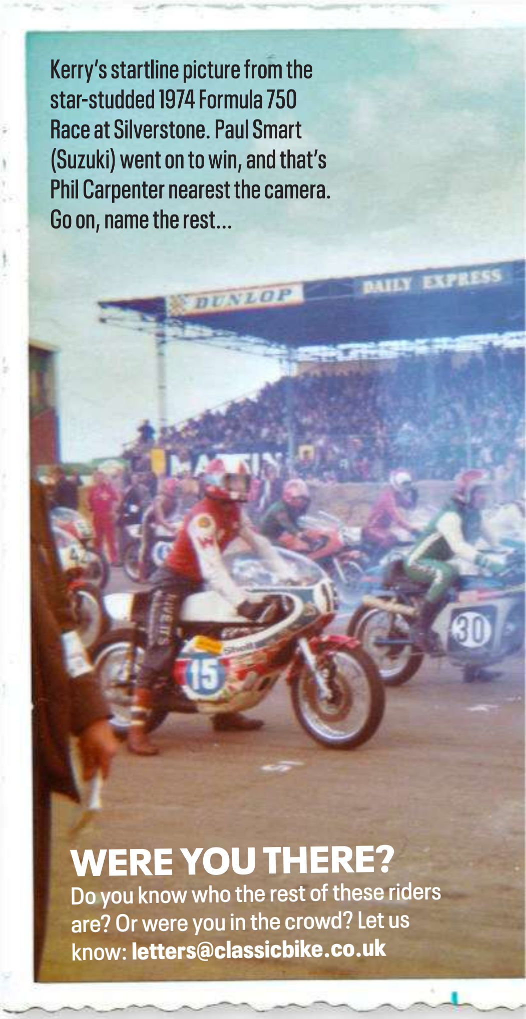
A lifelong drag racing devotee, Keith has been documenting quarter-mile action for over half a century. He was actualy there in 1975.

Pages 50-51

Rick Parkington

Even by Rick's standards, this is mad. Buy a project bike for its frame, then decide to fix your crashed original. Luckily he's got a 35 ton press...

Pages 120-123



Kerry's startline picture from the star-studded 1974 Formula 750 Race at Silverstone. Paul Smart (Suzuki) went on to win, and that's Phil Carpenter nearest the camera. Go on, name the rest...

WERE YOU THERE?

Do you know who the rest of these riders are? Or were you in the crowd? Let us know: **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

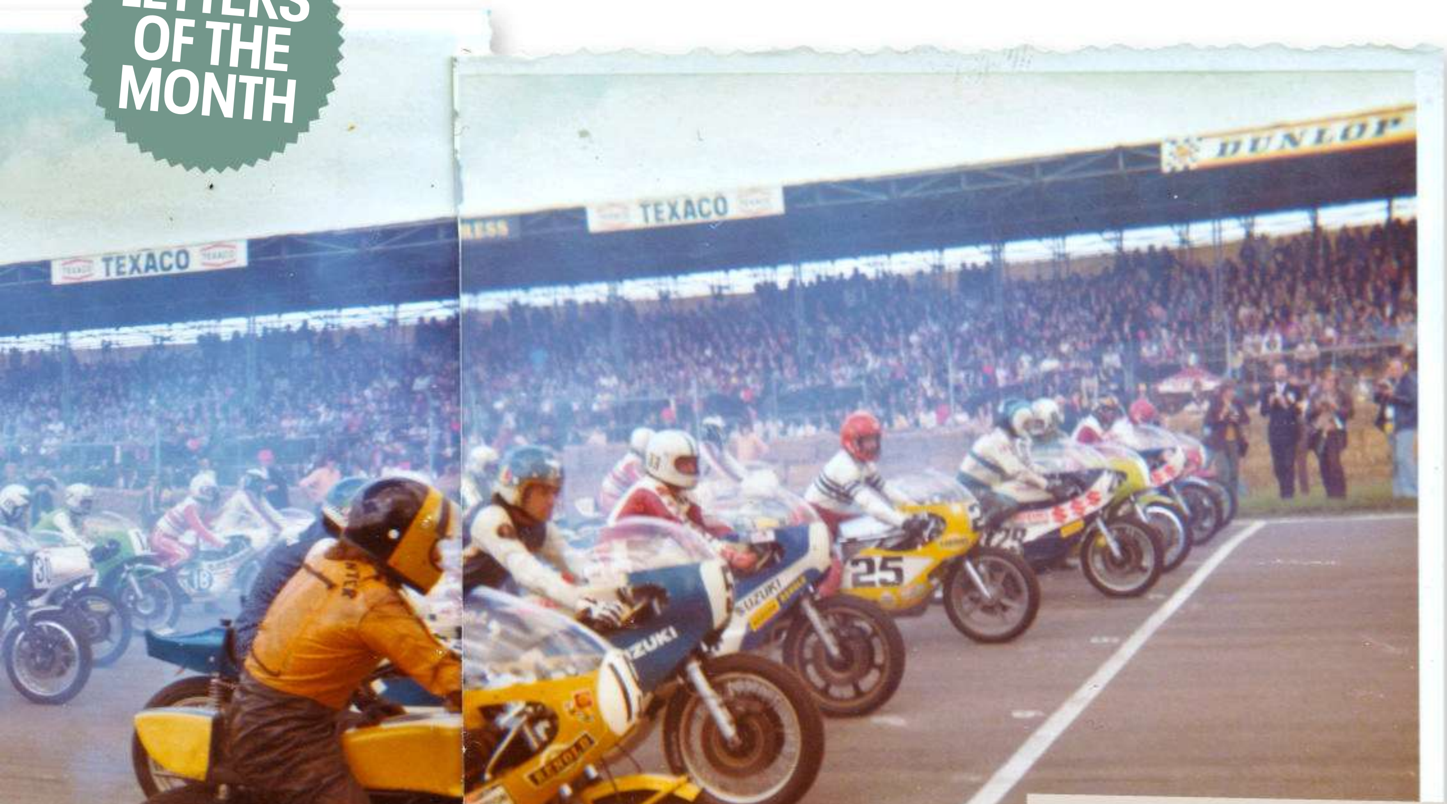
Self starter

Two things on the subject of Startline. First, here are a couple of pictures I took of the grid at the John Player International Grand Prix at Silverstone on Sunday, August 11, 1974. This was the line-up for the FIM Formula 750 race, which was followed later in the day by the Senior 500cc race and then the John Player International Grand Prix (251 to 750cc). Phil Read and Tepi Lansivuori didn't participate in this F750 race, which was disappointing, but we did get to see them later in the Senior and headline race on the MV Agusta and Yamahas (500 and 700).

Secondly, you printed another great Startline picture in the December 2024 issue – and asked if anyone knew who the rest of the riders are in that line-up at Scarborough (right), so here goes: No 6 between Granty and Chat is Jack Machin, No 7 wearing the Jarno Saarinen replica lid is Ivan Hodgkinson, No 42 is Tom Dickie (behind No 7). No 37 (the rider behind Neil Tuxworth, No 3) is not Paul Cott – it is the late, great Irish legend Tom

BILL JACKSON

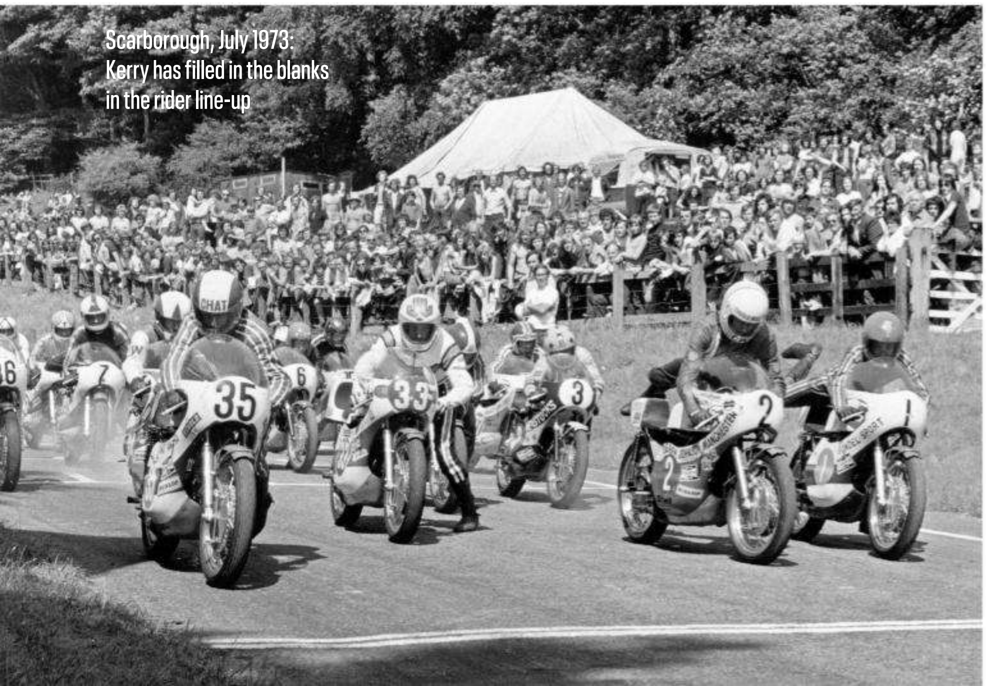
LETTERS OF THE MONTH

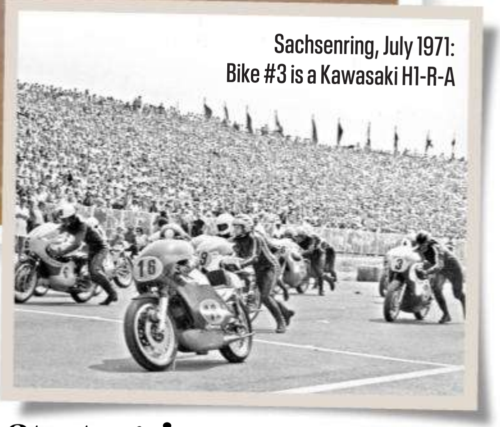

KERRY GREEN

Herron. No 39 is John Newbold in his 'off the shelf' Premier lid with the curly paintwork (between No 6 and No 33). Jack Machin and Ivan Hodgkinson were only supposed to race in the 125 and 250 races, but somehow were allowed to race in this 350cc final.

Kerry Green

'We saw Read and Lansivouri later in the Senior and headline race'


Scarborough, July 1973: Kerry has filled in the blanks in the rider line-up


Sachsenring, July 1971: Bike #3 is a Kawasaki H1-R-A

Start again

Regarding the startline photo taken at the Sachsenring in 1971, shown in your November issue, and subsequent to Kerry Green's response in December's *CB*, I would like to add my two penn'orth to this photo. My *Grand Prix Championships of the World 1949-75* book gives third as E Hiller, with H Brungger fourth (both on Kawasakis), K Auer fifth on a Matchless and J Campiche sixth on a Honda (it only gives the first six finishers, unfortunately).

Looking again at the photo, No 2 looks like a Matchless to me; can't work out the others. It's a shame *Motocourse* wasn't around then!!

Keep them coming – I love a quiz, me.

Alan Gell, Whitley Bay

We love the response that the Startline feature is getting, so we'll definitely be keeping them coming, and we'll try and turn up some motocross starts too. HW

Honda's two-stroke race rep restored
Andrea Coleman – a wild life in GPs
Norton's 1928 race-winning roadster
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NEW WORKSHOP SECTION

COVER IMAGES JASON CRITCHELL, MIKE KILBY, MICK WOOLETT & BONHAMS

Issue #540 of *Classic Bike* was brought to you...

...to the sound of
Led Zeppelin's *Physical Graffiti*, released in '75

...despite this distraction
'Kenny Roberts Indy Mile' on YouTube – spinetingling

.. with this refreshment
A bottle of Blue Nun – pure '70s sophistication

...and thanks to
Mike Jackson, Greg Moss and The Morini Riders Club

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MANOR PARK
CLASSICS

Classic Bike staffer Jim Moore and his 1988 Honda NSR250 at the 2006 Manx GP

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

Hey, that's my bike!

I've just noticed that the Honda NSR250 featured in the November issue (p15 – it sold for £3795) is my old bike, which has actually appeared in *Classic Bike* before, in around 2006-2007 when I worked for the magazine. I know it's my old bike – the slightly off-white rear wheel, HRC sticker on the bellypan, plus the damaged right-hand side panel are the giveaways. I won it on eBay in late 2006 for £475 – it was only a few villages away from me. I fitted new ignition pick-ups, fresh pistons, overhauled the forks, rode it on a trackday for *Classic Bike* and thrashed it around the Isle of Man when I covered the Manx GP, then got offered £750 for it. It was a tidy profit at the time, so I moved it on. It was a great bike and I wish I'd kept it!
Jim Moore, email

Cold comfort

I've enjoyed reading all the trials and tribulations that Mark Holmes has experienced with his Moto Guzzi T3. It finally seems to be sorted now; funny how things seem to work better when all the wires go to the right places and have good connections.

I enjoyed his most recent article, covering his trip to Spain for the 5000 Curvas, but noted his comments about getting 'bloody cold' at higher altitudes up in the Picos de Europa. It's all well and good having lots of layers of gear on, but has he ever considered getting some heated plug-in gear?

I never see any comments or references to this type of gear in the UK. I've used a 12-volt plug-in heated vest and gloves now for several years; this extends the riding season for an old guy like me well into November here on Vancouver Island, when it might only be 5°C or so. I'm not sure if any heated riding gear options are readily available in the UK, but here in Canada there's an outfit called Gears Canada, who have a wide range of outdoor heated clothes which I think was largely developed for the snowmobile crowd; check out their website (gearscanada.com).
**John Prior, Parksville,
British Columbia, Canada**

Your suggestion makes sense, John. However, as I've only recently gained the confidence that the Guzzi's electrical system is robust enough to start the bike and keep it running, it might be some time before I summon up the courage to rely on it for plug-in heated kit. Mark H

Wistful Triple

Your article on buying a Speed Triple in the December issue got me reminiscing about the 2004 model that I had for eight years and 22000 miles, and made me wistful for another. I would just like to add a couple of observations. As well as checking the rear wheel adjuster, the rear suspension linkage needs regular greasing – it doesn't have much protection if you ride all year round. I also had issues with the nearside spark plug getting wet. Any rain water, or hose pipe water from cleaning, would run into this spark plug.

At its first service, the dealer refused to remove and check this plug – it was corroded in place and they would not take responsibility in case they did some damage to the head. Apparently, I shouldn't have been hosing it down! Otherwise, the engine was the star of the show, pulling strongly from any revs – and I might still have it, if it hadn't have been declared a Cat D write-off after a car park ding. I wonder if EY04 ECW is still out there?

Richard Parker, email

Wheel therapy

Looking for something to do, I decided to tidy up the hubs on my A10. To be honest, part of the reason was so that I could rebuild the wheels once more. So the wheels were dismantled and the hubs tidied up with a few coats of paint. Then the fun starts. Just like Norman White said in the December issue of *CB*, I find it extremely therapeutic sitting at the bench, tweaking the spokes until the rim runs perfectly. It's a disappointment when they're done – I love it!

Terry Hoare, email

If I had £10,000...

I like the revamp of the magazine, with more workshop stories and the news about prices at the front, but the 'At Lunch With' interview is still the first thing I read. Last month's piece with Nigel Bosworth was great; I stopped midway to watch Nigel's heartbreaking ride in the 1992 250 Supercup race on YouTube.

The 'If I had £10,000...' article is a nice touch and it's got me daydreaming. I confess to being a reader without a classic bike; I ride a 2018 Ducati Mutistrada, but the recent fall in classic values has made me think about replacing it with classics.

These days, £10,000 could get me a Norton Commando Roadster like I wanted back to the 1970s, maybe a Kawasaki GPz900R for long rides and a nice trail bike too. I'm sure that the fall in values will bring more people into classics.

The trouble is, I'd need another 10 grand to build a bigger garage.

Francis O'Dowd, Coventry

It's true that £10,000 can buy three great bikes. And also that we need more garage space. What's your ten grand trio? HW

Send your letters to...

Share your opinions, stories, questions and memories by sending them to letters@ classicbike.co.uk

ClassicBike

MAGAZINE NEEDS YOU...

Have you just bought a new project? Or have you finished a project, taken part in an event or just been for a ride? Do you have pictures of you or your friends from your biking past? Or can you identify the riders or a face in the crowd from the Startline image on page six? Please write and tell us

Startline

How many riders from the 1975 Cadwell Park startline can you identify?

Letters

Want to start a conversation about bike values or commend good service?

Your Classics

Just acquired a new project, completed a restoration or been for a great ride?

The Way We Were

Have you got pictures and a story from your biking past? Let us know.

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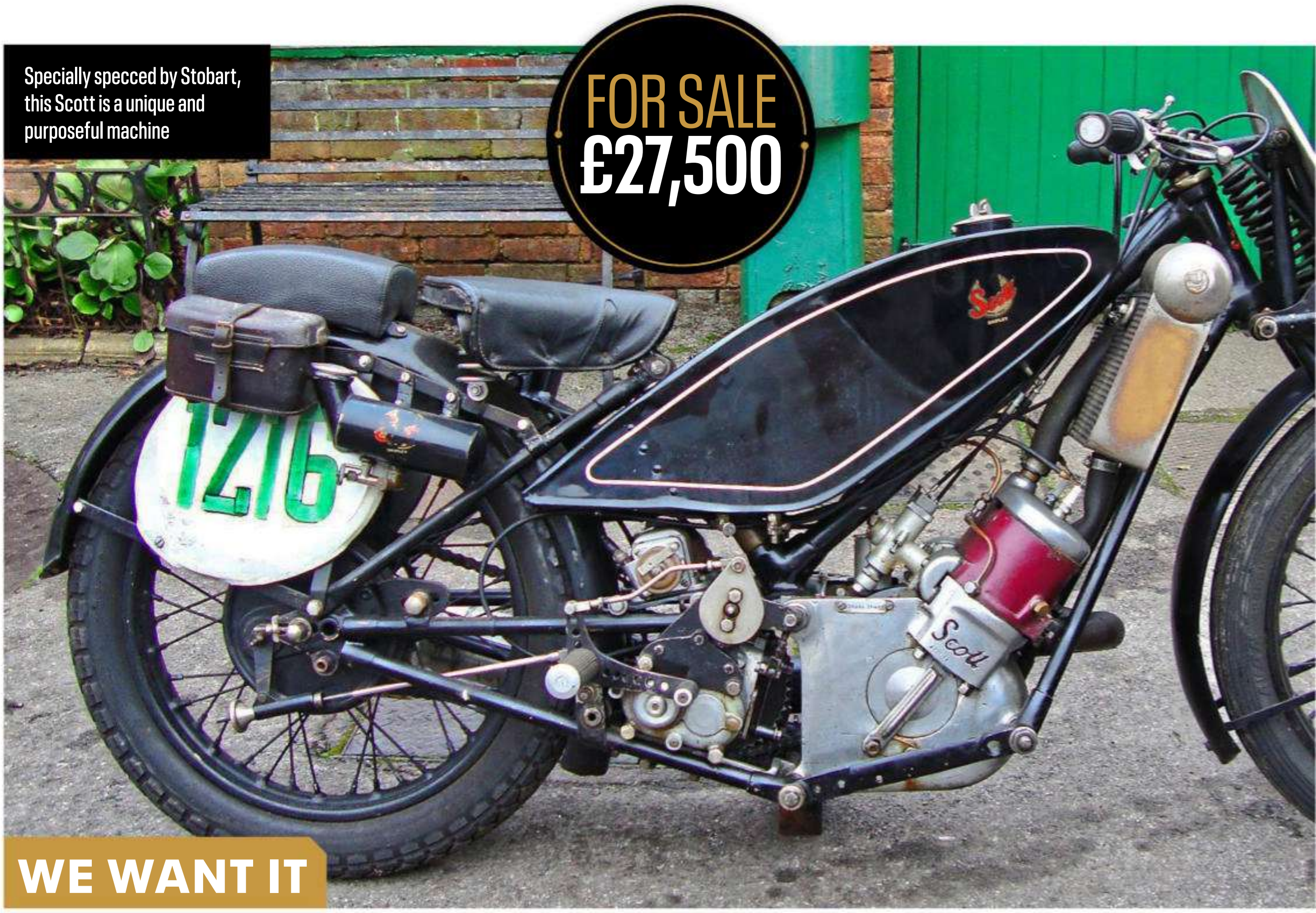

Specially specced by Stobart, this Scott is a unique and purposeful machine

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£27,500

WE WANT IT

History in the metal

This is incredibly original **1930 Scott Sprint Special** was ridden by Roland Stobart in the Manx Grand Prix of that year. We love the way it looks and the fascinating story behind it

Talk about provenance. This motorcycle is surely one of the best vintage two-strokes with the most storied background you can buy. A factory machine with unimpeachable history – that also happens to be a scream to ride – does not come better than this.

Scott's entrants for the 1930 Manx Grand Prix were Noël Mavrogordato (better known as 'Mavro') and Roland Stobart, who also rode a bit of speedway. Both had been 'up' at Cambridge University together before they visited the Scott Competition Department at the Shipley, Yorkshire factory to spec-up their 'mounts' for the Manx.

Mavro favoured the early single-downtube frame, despite a duplex version being available, and Stobart opted for the same. The Auto Cycle Union was heavily against thinly-disguised factory bikes entered in amateur events and the term 'shamateur' was coined to heap scorn on these entrants. But as with almost any form of competition, anyone serious about winning regards the rule book as merely advisory.

Both machines were converted to foot-change gearshift, while frame lugs for sidecar use remained in place to lend a hint of 'hardly deviating from standard' to the bikes. The huge, flared fuel and oil tanks (oil filler on the left for IoM

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22 **Event report** Mostra Scambio autojumble

28 **Your classics** Rescued, revived & ridden

pitlane practice of the time) must have been a slight giveaway, and the presence of well-known Scott race mechanics in the pits on Glencrutchery Road must have further incensed the ACU.

Stobart finished 15th in the Manx Senior with a race time of 3h 29m 57s at an average of 64.71mph. Mavro scored a DNF. The Stobart machine began with a 596cc engine, changed by the factory to a 498cc unit (stamped 'SP' for spare) All the numbers stack up and it comes with its original reg number on a V5.

Few vintage machines look better than a Scott stripped to the bone for competition use, and this is one of the most handsome you'll see; blindingly original too. Scotts have always been undervalued, and the £27,500 Verralls are asking for this ex-Stobart gem is more than reasonable.

More interesting than any early Norton Manx, it's still a 90mph machine. As Mavro replied when told he could no doubt win a Manx GP on a Norton: "I daresay, but I'd rather lose on a Scott".

verralls.com

WORDS: MARK GRAHAM PHOTOGRPAHY: DAVE COLLISTER & BONHAMS

'If I had £10,000...'

Expert trials rider, TT winner and scion of a Yorkshire dynasty, **Nick Jefferies** tries his best to keep three two-wheeled desires within an imaginary £10k budget

Triumph T15 Terrier

"Where did this ten grand come from, anyway? Suppose I'd better not ask. First thing would be a Triumph T15 Terrier. We used to tear around at the back of the shop on one; VNW 190 was the reg number and we had that in 1959.

"It's a nostalgia trip, I'll admit that. I mean, I've still got my ex-Gordon Farley Triumph Trials Cub, and aside from Scotts I love my Triumphs. £2500 should get you a T15 in perfect nick, so that's the first stop on the buying spree. I'd also like a 1937/8 Triumph Tiger 80 with the upswept pipe, and a 1969 TR6, and..."

£2500
TGP 53L

Scott two-speed

"I love Scotts and I could so easily go way over the limit on money here. It would have to be a 1920s two-speed. I'm president of the Bradford Motor Club and we've got strong Scott connections. Alfred Scott organised the Scott Trial in 1924 and my father Allan won the 1932 event. That was on WX 9790, which sadly got bastardised during the war – and we never bothered restoring it.

"We've got three Scotts and none of them have ever been restored. So an open-frame Scott would be around eight or nine thousand pounds – but with prices coming down a bit these days, it could be a bit less and might just squeeze within budget."

£8000
OL 3975

Honda CB160/SS90

"Something Japanese from the mid-1960s – nobody realised just how good these machines were at the time. I'd go for a Honda CB160, or maybe an SS90, depending on what sort of state it was in. I've got hardly any money left now, so it'd have to be a basket case.

"We had a lot of these early Hondas in the shop and a lot of the older folk were set against them, because of the war, because they were Japanese machines. But they were outstanding motorcycles. The Yamaha YGF-1 was an amazing bike, too. I think I'm just about still within my ten grand limit, give or take the odd couple of hundred quid, aren't I?"

Not really, but who's counting?

12 bikes you can buy

Gez Kane is always on the lookout for the tastiest bikes on sale. Here's what he's spotted for sale this month – there must be something below to tempt you...

MECUM AUCTIONS, INC.

No estimate

1967 Honda CR450

One of two surviving Team Hansen Daytona race bikes (the other is in Honda's Motegi Collection Hall) built for Daytona '67. Ridden by Jim Odom, it achieved the fastest lap ever recorded at Daytona by a motorcycle.
January auction **mecum.com**

MECUM AUCTIONS, INC.

No reserve

1974 Ducati 750SS

Being offered from the estate of vintage motorcycle personality Joe Gardella. In unrestored condition with original paint, Scarab front calipers, Conti silencers and Borrani rims. One of 401 produced.
January auction **mecum.com**

£5495

1997 Yamaha V-Max

Introduced in 1985 and remaining in production until 2000, the V-Max was one of the cult classics of the '80s. This three-owner machine is a full-power UK-market model in fine condition with 17,000 miles.
Dealer sale **anthonygodin.co.uk**

£5750

1955 TriBSA

An elegant, stylish special without the skinned knuckles of building one yourself. BSA Shooting Star frame with 1953 Triumph Thunderbird engine. Very well put together at a cost said to be double the asking price.
Dealer sale **classicsuperbikes.co.uk**

£3495

1965 Suzuki T20

A matching-numbers US-market example of Suzuki's class-leading Super Six. Now UK registered. Runs and rides well and is in very nice condition, with good paintwork and chrome. Wheels recently rebuilt.
Dealer sale **classicbikes.co.uk**

£3995

1992 Ducati 900SS

A lovely, original bike with two prior owners and a documented service history, original sales invoice and all MoTs. Mileage is 29,151, its Bridgestones are virtually new and the bike will be ready for its new owner to ride.
Dealer sale **classicbikes.co.uk**

£9500

1995 Aprilia RS250

MkI Loris Reggiani edition of this sought-after 250 race replica. Currently fitted with aftermarket Tyga exhausts and MSA screen (originals included). Relined cylinder, new pistons and crank rebuild.
Private sale **07950 064579**

£5250

1968 BSA B44 Victor special

Full engine rebuild recently completed (receipts for £2600) and many new parts. It's a US-market model and, while not catalogue-correct (seat, mudguards), it does look very tidy. Will need running in.
Private sale **07710 596501**

£2950

1995 Triumph Speed Triple

This modern classic is described as being in superb condition all round with 36,500 miles showing. Aftermarket exhaust system and YSS shock are currently fitted, but the original parts are included in the sale.
Private sale **07825 082879**

£9950

2001 Honda VTR1000-SP1

This 11,000-mile modern classic has been regularly serviced and is in lovely condition. Some aftermarket parts, including Arrow exhaust, Gilles rearsets and Penske shock, but all original parts included.
Dealer sale **classicsuperbikes.co.uk**

£4300

1977 Yamaha RD250D

Part-restored, matching-numbers bike with fresh Modena Red paintwork, overhauled brakes, new electronic regulator/rectifier and new piston rings. Looks to be mostly original, including exhausts and mudguards.
Private sale **07749 202932**

£5250

1972 Triumph Daytona

With just 39,000 miles recorded since new and fully restored 15 years ago, this superb bike has been owned by the seller since then. Recently fitted with a new pair of Amal Premier carburettors and electronic ignition.
Private sale **01937 845702**

Quick guide

Suzuki GT750

Suzuki's big triple remains one of the best-loved '70s superbikes. Kettle Club membership secretary **'Skid' Brown** explains just what the attraction is

Why you want one

There's no other bike like a GT750. And there are so many reasons why. It's the first Japanese mass-produced, water-cooled two-stroke, the first production motorcycle with twin front discs as standard and the first - and only - two-stroke to be fitted with CV carburettors.

But the attraction is more than that. It's the relative simplicity, the comfort and the bulletproof durability of that over-engineered engine. Oh, it also looks great - and it's actually a perfectly practical everyday ride.

What to look for

Apart from the usual classic bike things that apply to any make or model, the main thing you want from a bike you're thinking of buying is provenance. Although the GT750 engine is solidly engineered, try to buy one with as much documented history as you can.

The crank is the cornerstone of the engine, so ask to see receipts for a crank or engine rebuild. There are specialists in the club who undertake work on Kettles, and Grampian Motors have a great reputation too.

PRICES

Mint £10,000-12,000
Good £7000-8000
Project £2000-2500

GARY MARGERUM

How much to pay

Like most classics, prices of GT750s have fallen a little over the past few years. First-year J models fetch the highest prices. Two to three years ago, you'd be looking at £14,000 for a mint example. Now they're maybe £12,000. The 1973 K model - the rarest variant, produced for less than a year - isn't much different. You'll probably have to spend around £11,500 for a top example nowadays. L, M and A models might make £10,000-10,500, with a tidy rider going for £7000-8000.

Join the club

No, really do. Especially if you're looking to buy a Kettle. Buying from a club member is a pretty safe bet. There's so much knowledge and experience within the club and plenty of advice available for would-be buyers.

And get in before next year. It's our 30th anniversary and we're putting together a massive calendar of events. We plan to set a new world record for the most Kettles in one place at our Annual Rally in July. Be there.
thekettleclub.com

12 bikes that sold

Auction prices, live and online, provide a genuine guide to values. **Gez Kane** watched these bikes sell last month

£3220

1976 Suzuki TS125

This unrestored and low-mileage machine is in exceptionally good cosmetic order and very original, but was described as being in need of some recommissioning. UK registered on V5C.

iconicauctioneers.com

£6900

1990 Honda Africa Twin

This is the desirable RD-03 version of the Africa Twin, a 647cc European-market bike that pre-dated the official UK 750 models (though a few were brought in by dealers). Partially restored and UK registered in 2021.

iconicauctioneers.com

£4600

1981 Kawasaki GPz550-D1

A rare survivor of the first, twinshock GPz550 model. An Italian import, now UK registered, this largely original and unrestored bike is in good rather than concours condition.

iconicauctioneers.com

£98,900

1997 Honda NSR500 VF

Setting a new live auction world record price for the model, this is one of only 20 factory-built GP V-twins produced. Supplied new to the vendor in 1997 by Padgett's of Batley, it's in superb, original condition.

iconicauctioneers.com

£24,150

1948 Vincent Series B Rapide

Originally supplied to Argentina, restored and repatriated in 1990 and restored again from 2019-2022 by the VOC. Replacement (1949) engine and no rear frame number affects the value, but it still looks cheap.

iconicauctioneers.com

£2484

1959 BSA C15 trials

A converted road model, fitted with a later engine and forks, this BSA has been owned by the vendor since 1984 and benefits from trials gearing, electronic ignition and is road registered. A great way into pre-65 trials.

angliacarauctions.co.uk

£2445

1962 Royal Enfield Super 5

Now fitted with a four-speed gearbox (probably no bad thing), this three-owner bike has been restored a few years ago. Ready to ride and comes with a history file including receipts for parts and work.

eBay

£3700

1966 BSA A7 Royal Star

This lovely 500 twin seems like a decent buy. Well maintained and cherished, according to the owner and in excellent running order. Starts easily, recent carb rebuild and ignition system renewed.

eBay

£8000

1974 Kawasaki H1

Professional engine rebuild just 90 miles ago. Brakes rebuilt, carbs overhauled and in excellent running order. Unrestored cosmetically, with original paint. Delkevic pipes fitted, but originals supplied.

eBay

£7475

1972 Moto Guzzi V7 Sport

A US-market version of the desirable V7 Sport model that was Guzzi's top sports bike until the launch of the Le Mans. Restored to an excellent standard in America between 2001-03 and overhauled in 2023.

iconicauctioneers.com

£2376

1964 Triumph Tiger 90

A tidy little 350 twin at an affordable price. Looks to have been well looked after, with recent fuel tap, ammeter, exhaust, speedometer and tachometer. Fitted with later twin-leading-shoe front brake.

angliacarauctions.co.uk

£5300

1976 Yamaha FS1-E

Maybe the days of the £10,000 Fizzie are gone for a while. This one was restored by a previous owner and has been used on sunny days only by the seller. Some marks on exhaust, but overall very good condition.

eBay

Price check

Triumph Bonnevilles

Triumph's **T120/T140** twins are a mainstay of the classic market, but what's happening to values? The past three months of auction prices tell the story

Bike	Description	Winning bid	Auctioneer
1961 Triumph T120	Superb condition, three owners, nine-stud head.	£9150	Ebay
1979 Triumph T140D	Special Ex-NMM display, never used or registered.	£8740	H&H
1965 Triumph T120	One owner 16 years, great condition, regularly used.	£7475	H&H
1959 Triumph T120	Good first-year UK model, unused for some time.	£7475	Iconic
1964 Triumph T120	Nice standard UK model, possible crank bearing issue.	£7163	eBay
1959 Triumph T120	US model stored for some time, earlier restoration.	£6555	Iconic
1970 Triumph T120R	Canadian import, older resto in good cosmetic order.	£6325	Bonhams
1977 Triumph T140J	Silver Jubilee UK model, regularly serviced and original.	£6095	H&H
1976 Triumph T140V	Very good condition, runs well, some updates.	£6000	eBay
1971 Triumph T120R	Restored, excellent condition, runs and rides well.	£5250	eBay
1974 Triumph T120V	US import, nicely restored, rebuilt engine, running well.	£4950	Iconic
1967 Triumph T120R	Very good condition, Boyer ignition, new parts, runs well.	£4750	eBay
1967 Triumph T120	Project bike requiring total restoration. Complete.	£4200	eBay
1981 Triumph T140E	Unused since 2012, currently a non-runner with no spark.	£3910	Bonhams
1987 Triumph T140	Harris built, good condition, but unused for some time.	£3680	Bonhams
1977 Triumph T140V	Average condition, starts and runs but needs work.	£3450	eBay
1966 Triumph T120	Slightly scruffy project for restoration, engine seized.	£2995	eBay
1976 Triumph T140V	Earlier restoration, US bike, needs recommissioning.	£2875	Iconic
1972 Triumph T120V	Non-running resto project with damaged frame.	£2530	Bonhams
1980 Triumph T140D	incomplete project, engine turns with good compression.	£2216	eBay

'How much?' Gez Kane on classic values

The iconic Bonneville hasn't been immune to the market downturn, but I reckon prices are beginning to bottom out. Not so long ago, a mint pre-unit machine might make more than £10,000 – but not any more. It's true that some sellers are still asking £10,000 and beyond, but the sold prices are a true reflection of the real state of the market.

First-year and limited production models can make more; a genuine and immaculate TT Special might sell for more than £10,000, but you should be able to get a good mid-'60s unit construction bike for £5000; later T140s in decent order can be had for £4000.

Prices of project bikes continue to amaze me, though. After resto costs, a £2500 bike is no longer a 'bargain'.

The *Classic Bike* auction diary

January 7-19 Mecum Kissimmee sale, Osceola Heritage Park, Kissimmee, Florida, USA. **mecum.com**

January 17-27 Bonhams January Online Sale. **bonhams.com**

January 25/26 Anglia Car Auctions Classic Car and Bike sale, The Cattlemarket, Beveridge Way, King's Lynn, Norfolk. **angliacarauctions.co.uk**

January 29-February 1 Mecum Las Vegas Sale, South Point Hotel and Casino, Las Vegas, Nevada, USA **mecum.com**

February 5-7 Mathewsons online sale. **mathewsons.co.uk**

February 16 Iconic Auctioneers sale, The London Classic Motorcycle Show, Excel London, Royal Victoria Dock, London **iconicauctioneers.com**

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1988 Honda RC30 with 3,500 miles

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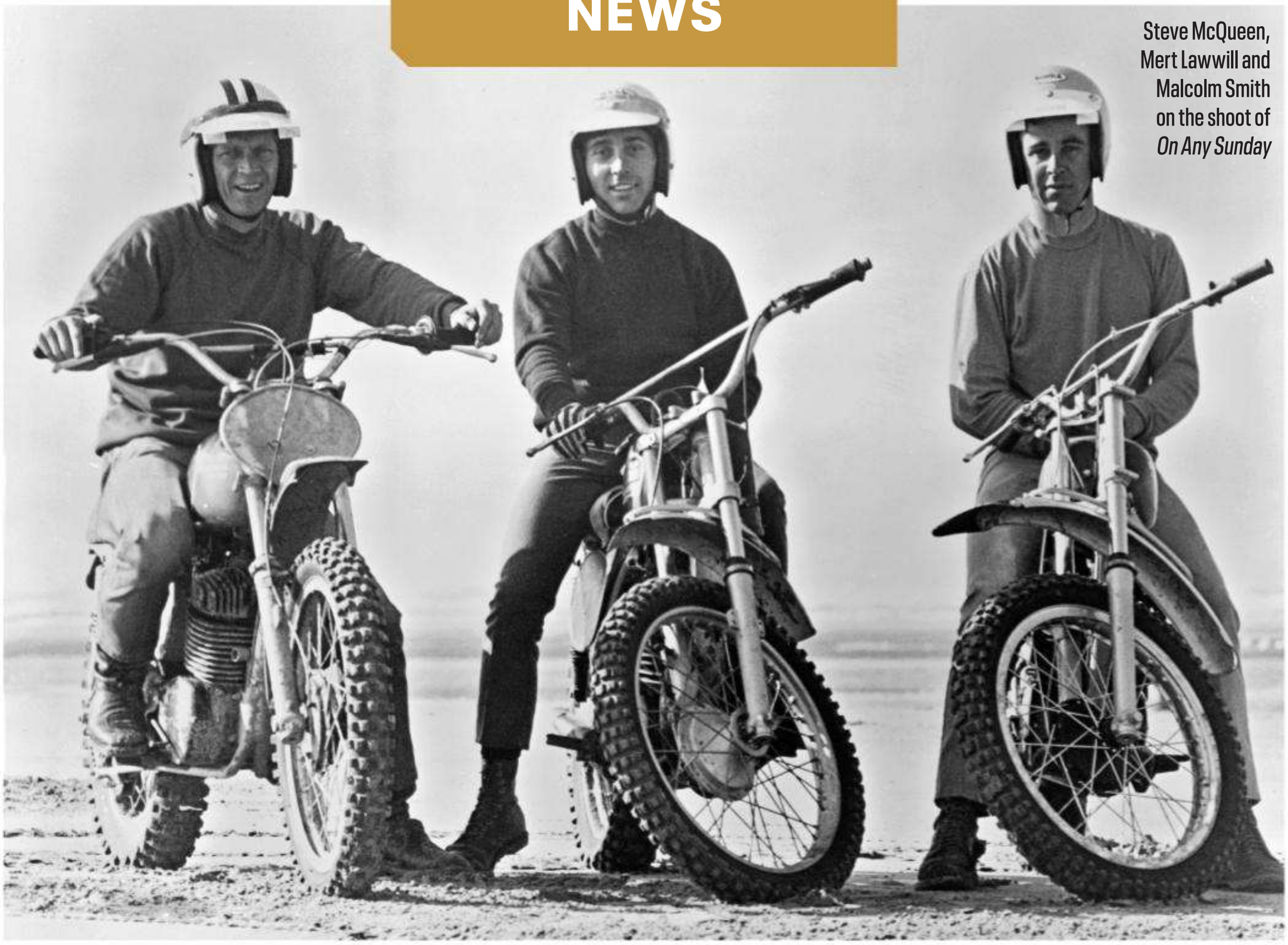


Steve McQueen, Mert Lawwill and Malcolm Smith on the shoot of *On Any Sunday*

SOLAR PRODUCTIONS

RIP Malcolm Smith

The off-road racing legend was a star of seminal film *On Any Sunday*

One of the most influential figures in 1970s motorcycling has died. Malcolm Smith – a star of the 1971 film *On Any Sunday*, six-time Baja 1000 winner and eight-time ISDT Gold Medalist – passed away in November at his home in California, aged 83.

"What an amazing contributor to off-road sport he was," says Mike Jackson, who raced against Smith while working for Norton in America in the early 1970s. "I only rode against Malcolm once, at the High Sierra enduro," recalls Mike, a fast dirt bike rider who finished fifth out of 1200 in the 1972 Elsinore GP. "He was about 10 numbers behind, so I knew he'd come by – and sure enough, he went past. I thought: 'I'll learn something here,' so I tried to stay on his tail and it was magical the way that I couldn't. Within 20 seconds, he'd gone. Malcolm just flew. Wonderful. It was like when I tried to stay with Don Rickman or Jeff Smith back home in motocross.

"Of course, he's most famous for *On Any Sunday* and I raced in two or three events where they were filming. Then, joy of joys, I was invited to the film's premier by Paramount because they'd decided to promote the film through motorcycle dealers, not cinemas.

The film was a powerful ambassador for off-road motorcycling – it widened the tolerance of it and increased sales. I watched it the other night, actually – for about the 40th time – and it stands the test of time. Eight minutes of the 90-minute film are devoted to Malcolm's magic ride at Elsinore. Just fantastic."

Classic Bike will run a full obituary of the great Malcolm Smith in a future issue.

SS50 to Istanbul

Congratulations to Phil Ranson, who recently rode 2000 miles from his home in Romford to Istanbul in Turkey on his 1970s Honda SS50. He crossed France, Belgium, Luxembourg, Germany, Austria, Slovenia, Italy, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Albania, North Macedonia and Greece before arriving in Turkey, having had precisely zero breakdowns.

He didn't use much fuel, either. "I was putting in half a gallon every other day, sol didn't spend much on petrol. It wasn't uncomfortable, becuse I wore padded cycling shorts and added a sheepskin to the seat, and some days I'd only ride 50 miles - there was no rush. Well, you can't really rush on a Honda 50." It's not Phil's first long-distance jaunt on the little sports moped. He's previously ridden it to Spain and fancies Morocco next.

PHIL RANSON

Briefs

RIP Ron Williams

Chassis guru Ron Williams has died, aged 84. The Maxton founder worked with top racers including Mick Grant, Charlie Williams, Chas Mortimer, Tom Herron, Joey Dunlop and Ron Haslam, changing their bikes from unwieldy barges into race-winning missiles. *Classic Bike* send condolences to Ron's friends and family.

Triples all round

Over 250 Triumph Speed Triples gathered at the Hinckley firm's museum last month to celebrate the model's 30th anniversary. The free event featured technical talks, a concours competition and a riding demo of the stunt Speed Triple 1050 (complete with bullet holes) from *The Hitman's Bodyguard* movie. The day ended with Triumph CEO Nick Bloor handing out the concours awards.

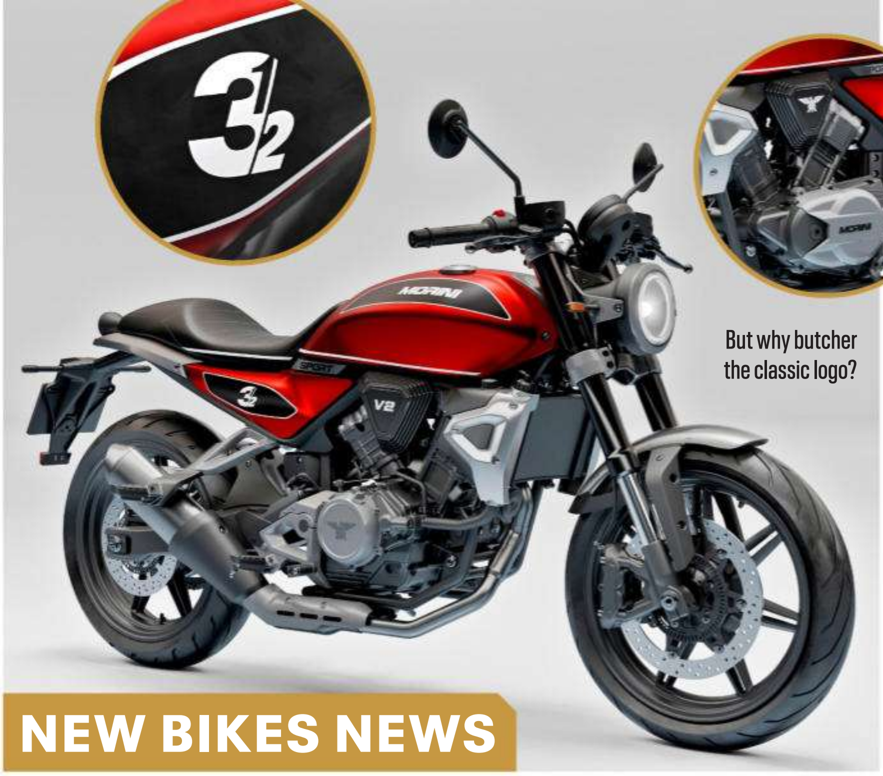
NMM Winter raffle prize

Top prize in The National Motorcycle Museum's Winter Raffle is a 1972 Norton Commando 750 Production Racer. Second and third prizes are Sealey tool cabinets. Tickets are £2 each (in multiples of five) and the draw will happen at the Stafford classic motorcycle show on April 27. Top prize winner of the summer raffle, a 1962 BSA Rocket Gold Star, was John Chapman. **thenmm.co.uk**

NMM

RIP TMS boss

Tony Cooper, proprietor of leading classic British parts source TMS, has died aged 78. Joining the trade in Leicester during the 1960s, he then set up a parts business in Nottingham, later taking over TMS. There were close ties with Meriden and several Triumph prototypes are displayed at the company's shop. Tony's long-time assistant Martin White is keeping the business going as usual. **tms-motorcycles.co.uk**



But why butcher the classic logo?

MOTO MORINI

NEW BIKES NEWS

Morini 3½ comeback

The trend for 'reimagining' famous old models continues with this, the new Moto Morini 3½. It features an all-new 350cc V-twin motor, which is very different to the 344cc original, with water cooling, dohc and a 60° V-angle rather than 72°. It makes a claimed 32bhp at 8500rpm.

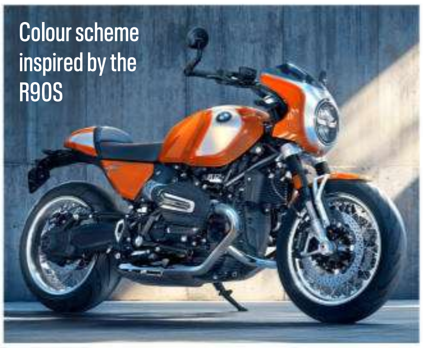
Though a creditable effort – most of the sub-400cc bikes these days are singles or parallel twins – the new 3½ won't have anything like the impact of the old one. When the original hit the market in 1974, it was a high-tech revelation with deft handling and zippy performance. Its price wasn't so clever, though – it cost almost as much as a CB750.

There's unlikely to be any such financial misstep with the new bike, which will be made in China by Morini's parent company Znen Motorcycles. Given that a 650cc version in the current Morini range costs £5999, the 3½ could be under £5000.

Engine aside, the 3½ is standard modern fare. There's a steel double cradle frame, 43mm non-adjustable upside-down forks, a preload-adjustable shock, single front brake disc with radial caliper, aluminium swingarm and neat circular TFT dash with satnav built in. It looks like the only other electronics are ABS. The new 3½ will be available in autumn 2025. **motomorini.eu**

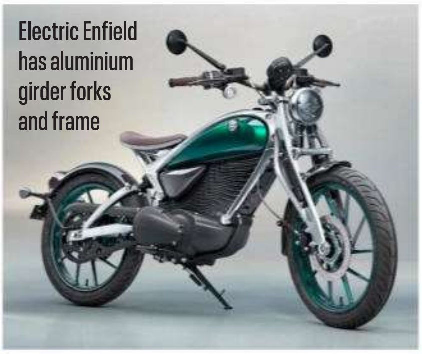
R90S inspiration

BMW has revealed a new 1200cc boxer twin inspired by the 1973 R90S. The new R12S is essentially an R nineT with a nose fairing and R90S-style paint that's crashed into BMW's accessory department. It will cost £18,460 when it goes on sale in February 2025. Thanks, but we'll take an orignal bike and keep the change. **bmw-motorrad.co.uk**



Colour scheme inspired by the R90S

BMW MOTORRAD



Electric Enfield has aluminium girder forks and frame

ROYAL ENFIELD

Flying Flea bites

Royal Enfield have revived the Flying Flea name originally attached to a WWII miltary model and will use it on a new electric bike due for launch next year. A neat prototype was shown at the EICMA show. The Indian company sold 110,574 bikes globally in October – the highest monthly figure in its history. **royalenfield.com**

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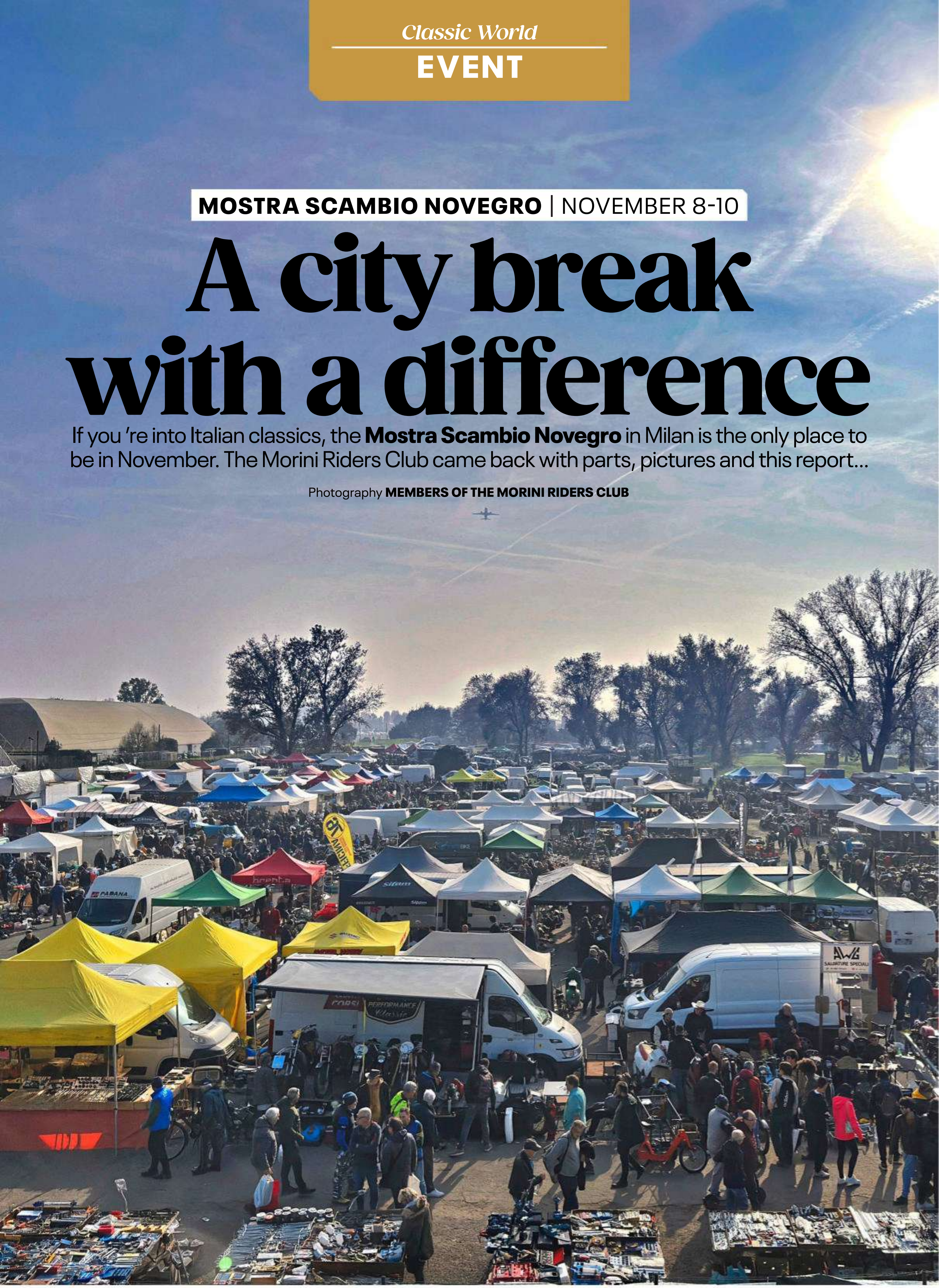
MOSTRA SCAMBIO NOVEGRO | NOVEMBER 8-10

A city break with a difference

If you 're into Italian classics, the **Mostra Scambio Novegro** in Milan is the only place to be in November. The Morini Riders Club came back with parts, pictures and this report…

Photography **MEMBERS OF THE MORINI RIDERS CLUB**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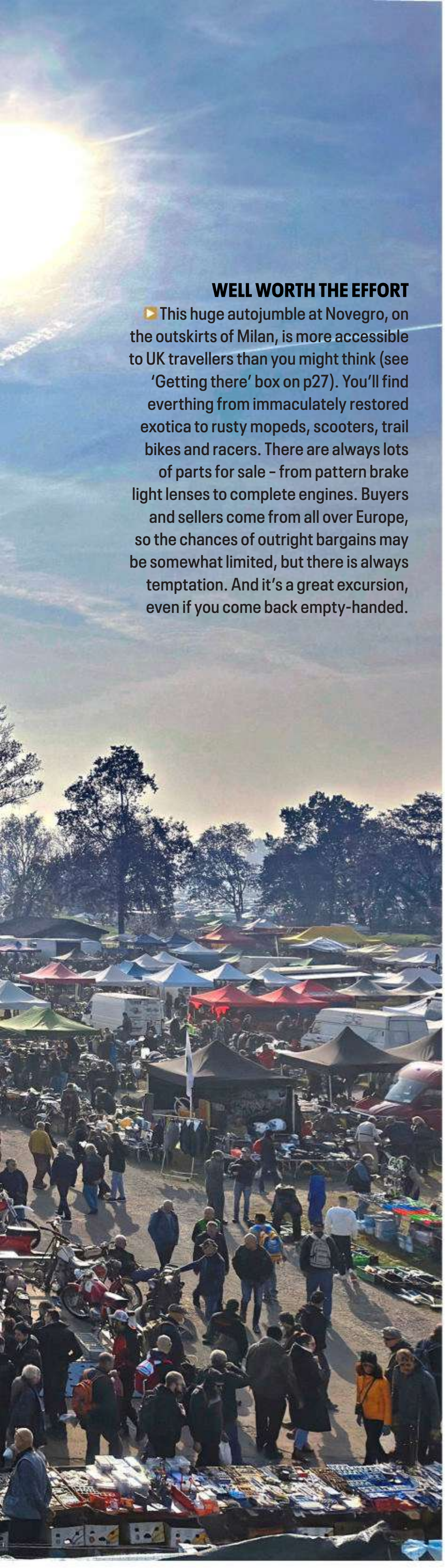
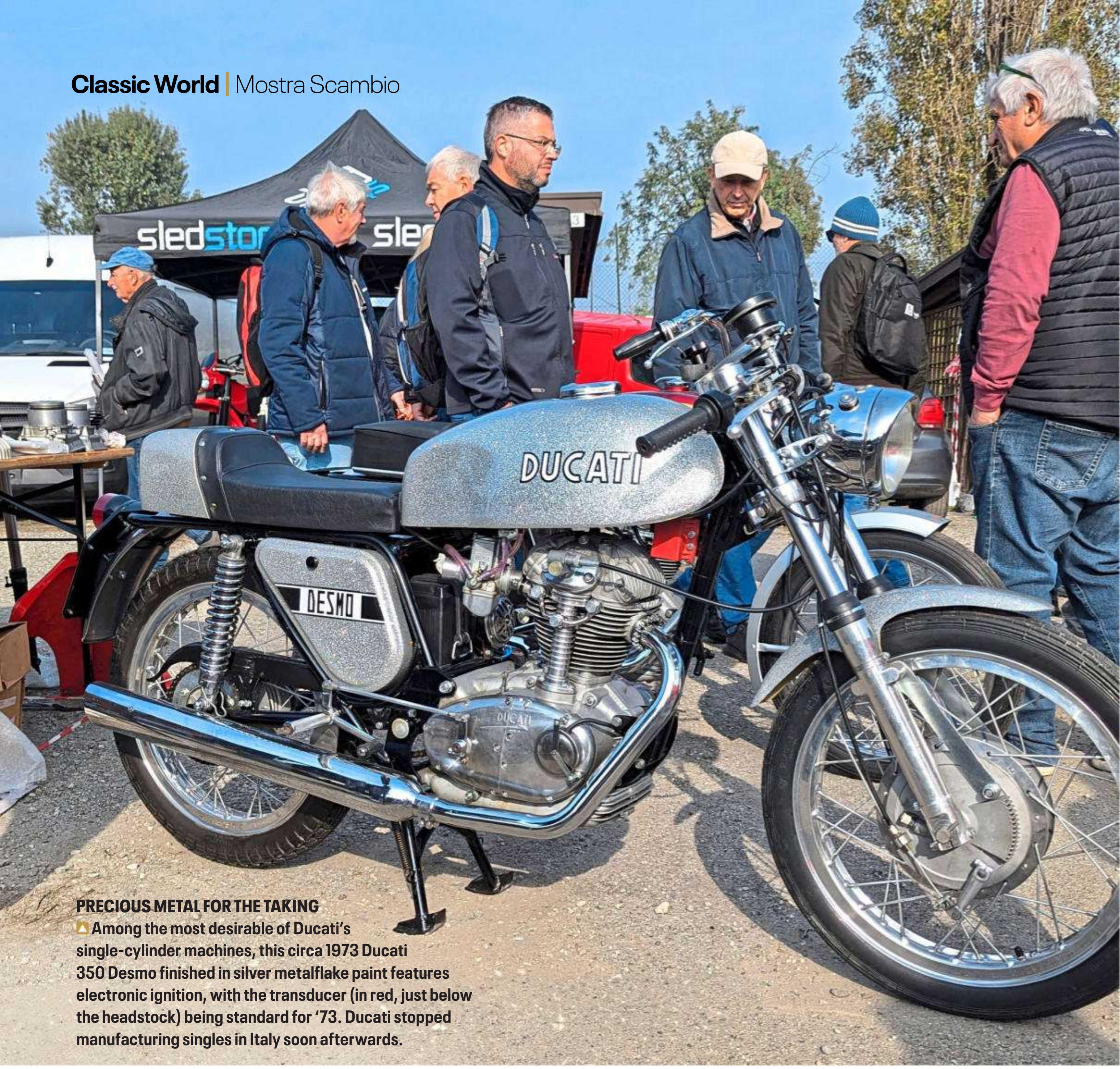


WELL WORTH THE EFFORT

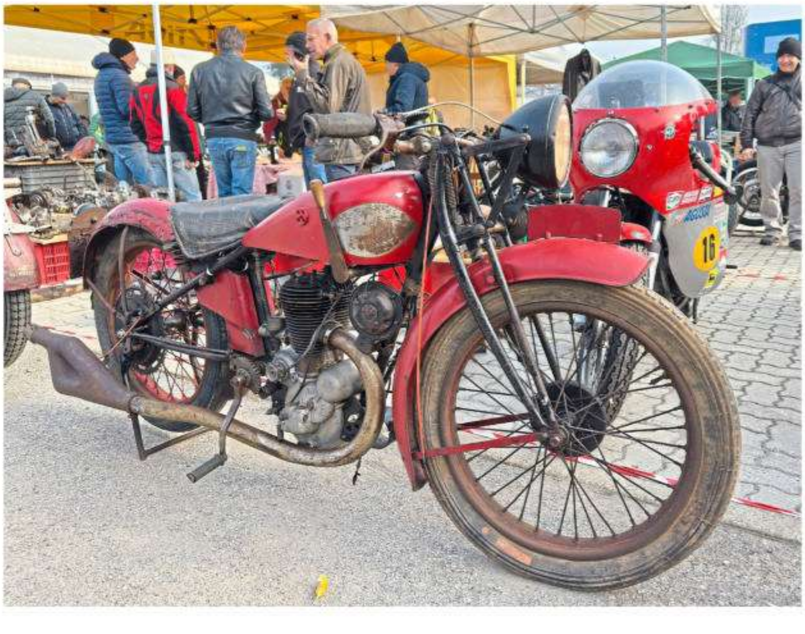
This huge autojumble at Novegro, on the outskirts of Milan, is more accessible to UK travellers than you might think (see 'Getting there' box on p27). You'll find everthing from immaculately restored exotica to rusty mopeds, scooters, trail bikes and racers. There are always lots of parts for sale – from pattern brake light lenses to complete engines. Buyers and sellers come from all over Europe, so the chances of outright bargains may be somewhat limited, but there is always temptation. And it's a great excursion, even if you come back empty-handed.

24MX
24MX
24MX



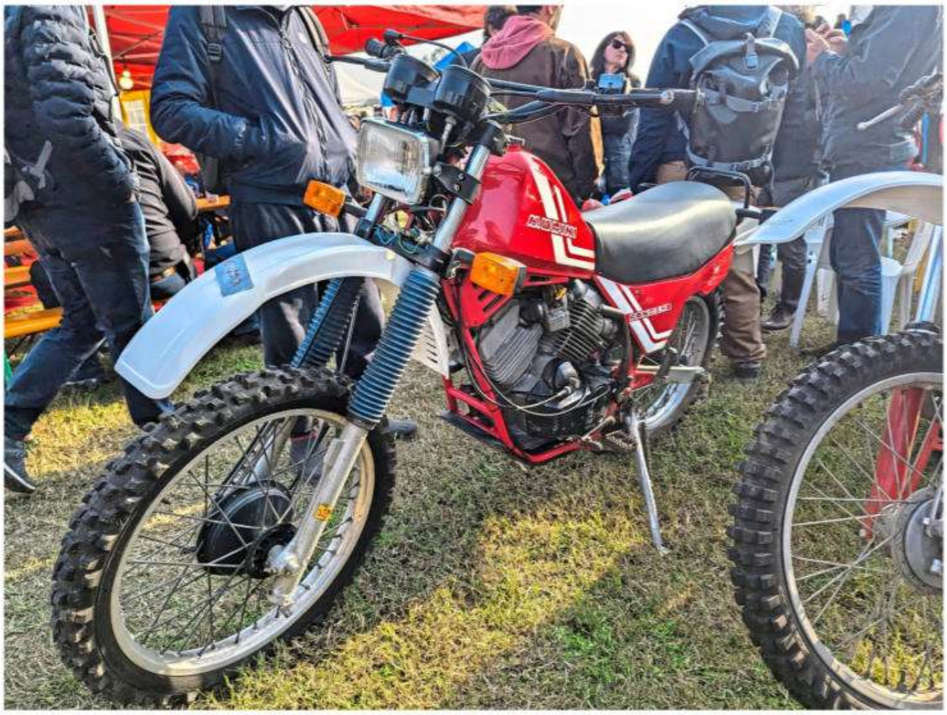
PRECIOUS METAL FOR THE TAKING

▲ Among the most desirable of Ducati's single-cylinder machines, this circa 1973 Ducati 350 Desmo finished in silver metalflake paint features electronic ignition, with the transducer (in red, just below the headstock) being standard for '73. Ducati stopped manufacturing singles in Italy soon afterwards.



OR MAYBE YOU FANCY AN ITALIAN OILY RAG?

◀ In the 1920s Garelli's 350cc two-strokes were race winners and record breakers, although by the late '20s motorcycle production declined until moped production began after WWII. This appears to be a touring version of their clever split single, which had two pistons on a Y-shaped conrod, but only one combustion chamber.



ARMSTRONG
SUZUKI
BMW
Kawasaki
YAMAHA
MAICO
MOTO MORINI
HONDA
GUZZI
KTM
GILERA

ON THE TRAIL OF A GOOD BUY

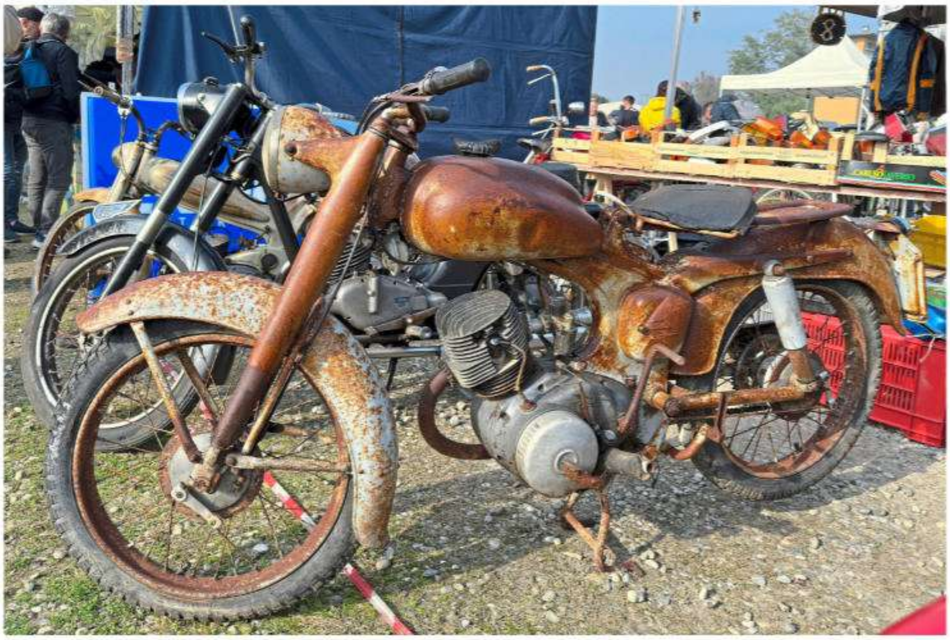
One of several Morini V-twins for sale, this circa 1983 Kanguro 350 trail bike had a €1500 sticker price, though its incorrect mudguards and missing headlight cowl made it worth a haggle. Most prices seemed negotiable, and values are generally down in Italy as well as the UK.

CLASSIC 'CROSSER BAR PADS

Looking for period off-road accessories? There are plenty of dirt bikes and bits available.

YOU PAY LESS FOR PATINA

The ohv Ducati 98 was produced with a pressed steel frame between 1953-56, making this an eary version. Bikes in this condition still appear at Novegro and other Italian bike jumbles, but there are fewer every year. Italian taxation rules make unrestored bikes better value than in the UK.



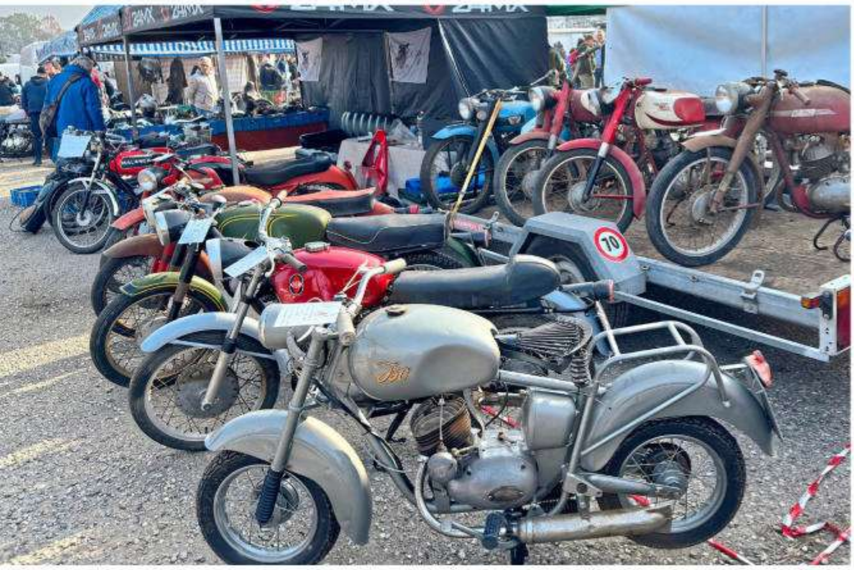
EDIBLE ACCESSORIES

Italian on-site catering is better than at Stafford. You can pick up a wheel of fine cheese as well as one for your bike.

RUBBERY GRUB

Want quality rubber wares? These Morini carb mounts cope better than many with unleaded fuel (startgomma.com).

AVERDA
Bianchi
MOTO MORINI

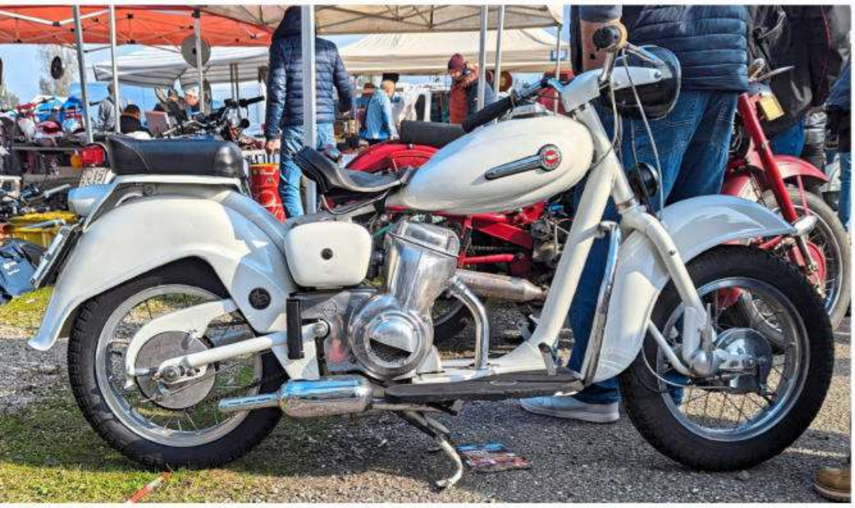


A NOD TO THE ODD

▲ Novegro turns up lots of machines that are unusaul outside (and inside) Italy. The small-wheeled wonder at the front here is an Iso, powered by a 123cc two-stroke split-single engine. The company also made the Isetta bubble car, and later the Iso Griffo luxury sports car.

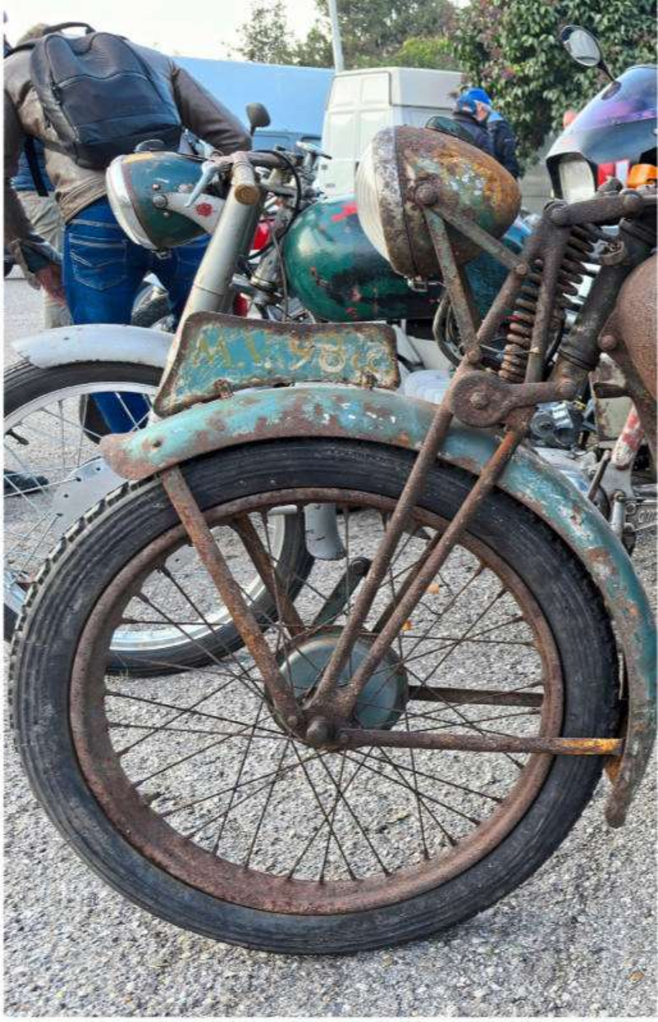
MOTORING HOME

▶ There are plenty of complete engines. You won't get them home as hand luggage, but may be able to track down a UK trader who's heading home by van and will carry your purchases, for a consideration.



DEFINITELY ON THE ENDANGERED SPECIES LIST

▲ Italy's booming 1950s bike market encouraged innovation and original thinking. Motom's half-scooter Delfino (yep, it means dolphin) has a fan-cooled 163cc four-stroke engine, a four-speed gearbox, 15in wheels and rear suspension with a single shock absorber mounted horizontally under the engine.

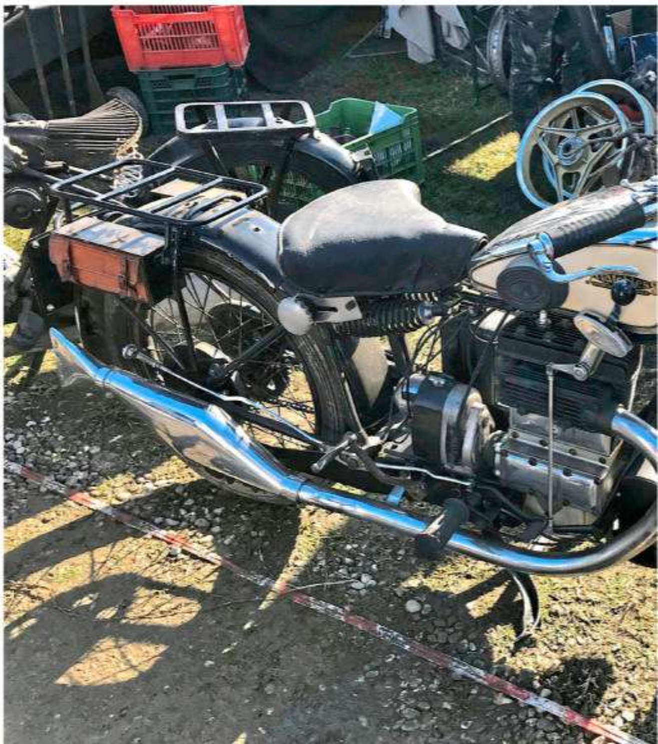


THE START OF A LEGEND – AND A GREAT FINISH

▲ The challenge of getting this running without cosmetic restoration is almost irresistible. The 98cc two-stroke was MV Agusta's first production motorcycle, made from 1946-49 – and this one looks largely complete, except for a missing brake pedal and decompressor mechanism. The extra spark plug is to fill the missing decompressor's hole.

YOU NEVER KNOW WHAT WILL TURN UP

▼ This South London-built 400cc V-twin Matchless Silver Arrow is rare enough in the UK, let alone Italy. Proves that although most bikes and spares at Mostra Scambio are Italian, there are some British and Japanese machines.



CLOCK THESE BARGAINS
◀ Smaller, high-value spares for Italian bikes are often good buys at this jumble. And you can get them home as hand luggage.

OFF TO PUT HIS FINDS TO GOOD USE
▼ Not just crucial spares for the project, but a bottle of wine to ease the pain of weary feet. That's one way to make a good day out progress into a good evening in.

Getting there

The Mostra Scambio happens in November at the Novegro exhibition centre in Milan. It's a 15-minute walk from Milan's Linate airport – you can get there and back in a day.
parcoesposizioninovegro.it

Event dates

Dates for January

1 Brooklands New Year's Gathering, Brooklands Museum, Weybridge, Surrey. Any pre-'95 classics welcome at this mixed bike and car event.
brooklandsmuseum.com

1 New Year's Day Motorcycle Meet, Sammy Miller Motorcycle Museum, Bashley Cross Roads, New Milton, Hampshire.
sammymiller.co.uk

1 Midland Classic Club trial, Dudwood Farm, near Elton, Derbyshire. Clear the head with a blast round the Peaks on your classic trials iron.
midlandclassic.co.uk

4 Rufforth Autojumble, Rufforth Park, Rufforth, North Yorkshire
rufforthautojumble.com

11/12 The *Classic Bike Guide* Winter Classic, Newark Showground, Nottinghamshire. The year's first big show. Club displays, trade stands and autojumble pitches. Plus Aussie legend Wayne Gardner.
classicbikeshows.com

18 Kempton Autojumble, Kempton Park Racecourse, Sunbury on Thames, Middlesex
kemptonautojumble.co.uk

19 AJS and Matchless Owners Club Founders Day and Classic Bike Day, Ace Cafe, Stonebridge, London Get your AMC fix – and breakfast.
acecafe.com

26 Newark Autojumble, Newark Showground, Nottinghamshire
newarkautojumble.co.uk

26 Talmag Trophy Trial, Hungry Hill, Aldershot, Hampshire. It's the 50th anniversary of the trial as a pre-65 four-stroke event. A good day out.
talmag.co.uk

Rescued, revived & ridden

The classic bikes that you have found, restored or just taken for a ride

RESCUED

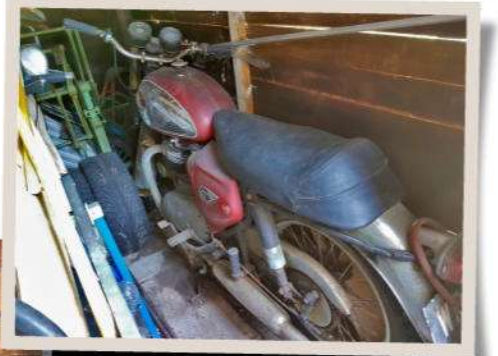
Seeing the light

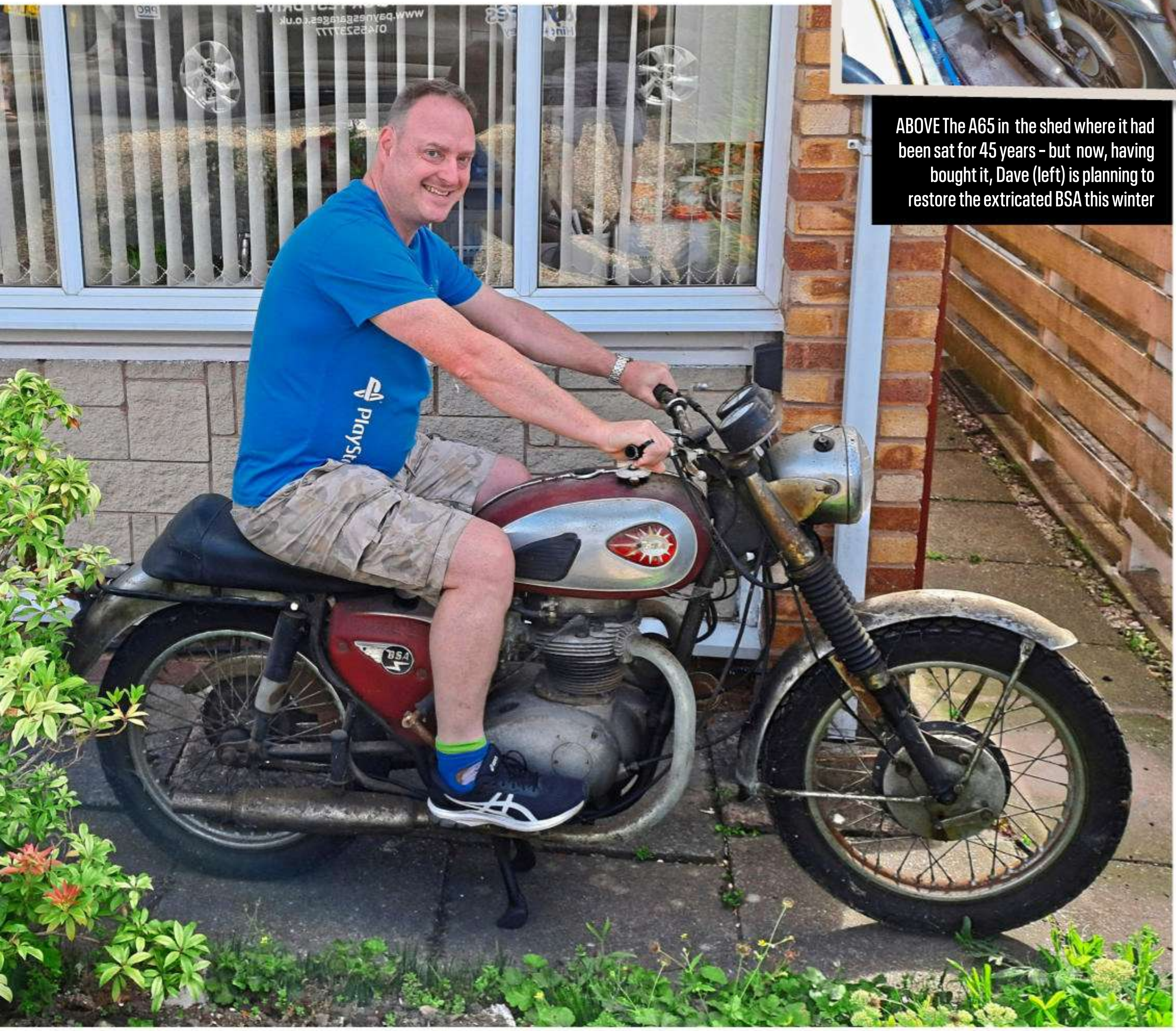
I purchased this 1966 BSA A65 in August 2024, having extricated it from a shed after what we believe to be 45 years (the tax disc expired in November 1979). Long-term *CB* readers with powerful memories may recall seeing the photo of the bike (right) in the shed in 'Your Classics' in the November 2018 issue.

The A65 had been parked in the late seventies alongside a 1963 B40 350 by the late father of Stephen Meredith. I've recently retired from work, so I've taken the A65 off Stephen's hands and plan to make it my winter project. The B40 is still in the shed, possibly to become a project for Stephen and son at some point.

After you printed the photo of the A65 in 2018, the original owner Ron Teal contacted *CB*, you forwarded the email to Stephen and they corresponded. Ron lives locally to me and visits the annual classic car and bike show in Hinckley – all being well, I'll ride it there next year.

Dave Bailey, Hinckley





ABOVE The A65 in the shed where it had been sat for 45 years - but now, having bought it, Dave (left) is planning to restore the extricated BSA this winter

DAVE BAILEY & STEPHEN MEREDITH

Simon loves to put his TRX850 to the use for which it was intended – and enjoys its unique characteristics

SIMON HADDOCK

SHOW US YOURS

We love to see your acquisitions, regular rides and projects. If you've just bought a project, finished a restoration or been for a ride, send us a picture. **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

REVIVED

Colourful tale

In 2006, I bought a bitsa 1992 900 Supersport. I didn't know much about motorbikes at the time, but it had a white frame, red fairing and tank, it said 'Ducati' down the side of it in big white letters – and it sounded just like my cousin 'Steady Eddy' McClements' old 851. It turned out my bike had started off life as a 750.

A crack in the frame was the catalyst for a strip and restoration. I converted it to accept forks from a 916 and 'Steady Eddy' kindly donated a spare 916 front wheel. It also got 916 handlebars and master cylinders, Keihin FCR carbs, a Superlight seat and racy rearsets. Strewth, it was uncomfortable! A 12-year dismantle-and-rebuild project on my own 851 resulted in the Supersport being very neglected, so I dragged it out from the back of the garage and took it apart for a full nut-and-bolt restoration.

I decided to put it back to standard trim (but keeping the FCRs). When I dropped off the tank, fairing, etc, at the painters, I yielded to 'Steady Eddy's influence again; in the early '90s, he had pulled up outside my parents' house in an '80s Porsche 911. I wanted one, but this is the closest I've got – '80s Porsche 911 Casablanca beige metallic paint. I'm really pleased with it.

Charlie Ashton

RIDDEN

Quirky character

This is my 1997 Yamaha TRX850 in its natural habitat – clocking up the miles and being ridden like she should. I came across it last summer, at local dealer Torbay Motorcycles in Newton Abbot, Devon. It reminded me of when I'd taken a new model on a test ride in '97 and been impressed with its handling, the sound of the engine and its style – it reminded me of an old Laverda 750 twin. I loved the engine configuration with its 270° crank.

I knew I had to have one back then – but family took priority, which is why I only took charge of this last year. The previous owner had really looked after her and very little had to be done to get her running well. She is a keeper – these bikes are getting pretty rare now, so if you find one, buy it, especially in this condition. I have enjoyed the bike more than I thought I would – a quirky machine full of character, she pops and farts periodically (especially when cold), but after some miles rewards you with a totally unique ride. Very little compares in terms of that massive midrange oomph– and she surprises riders of newer bikes.

Simon Haddock

Jacksons of Knebworth

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H BAUER PUBLISHING
H Bauer Publishing is a company registered in England and Wales with company number: LP003328, registered address: The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road, London NW1 2PL. VAT number 918 5617 01

MARKETING Phone 01733 468499
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Print production carl.lawrence@bauermedia.co.uk
Printed by William Gibbons & Sons Ltd
Distributed by Frontline, frontline-group.co.uk

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Classic Bike

PRESENTS

1975

50th ANNIVERSARY SPECIAL ISSUE

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JANAURY

Exhaust of the year

Honda launched the CB400/F to dealers in January 1975. It became one of the best-loved bikes of the decade; 50 years later it's a great classic buy

Words **GEZ KANE** Photography **BAUER AUTOMOTIVE**

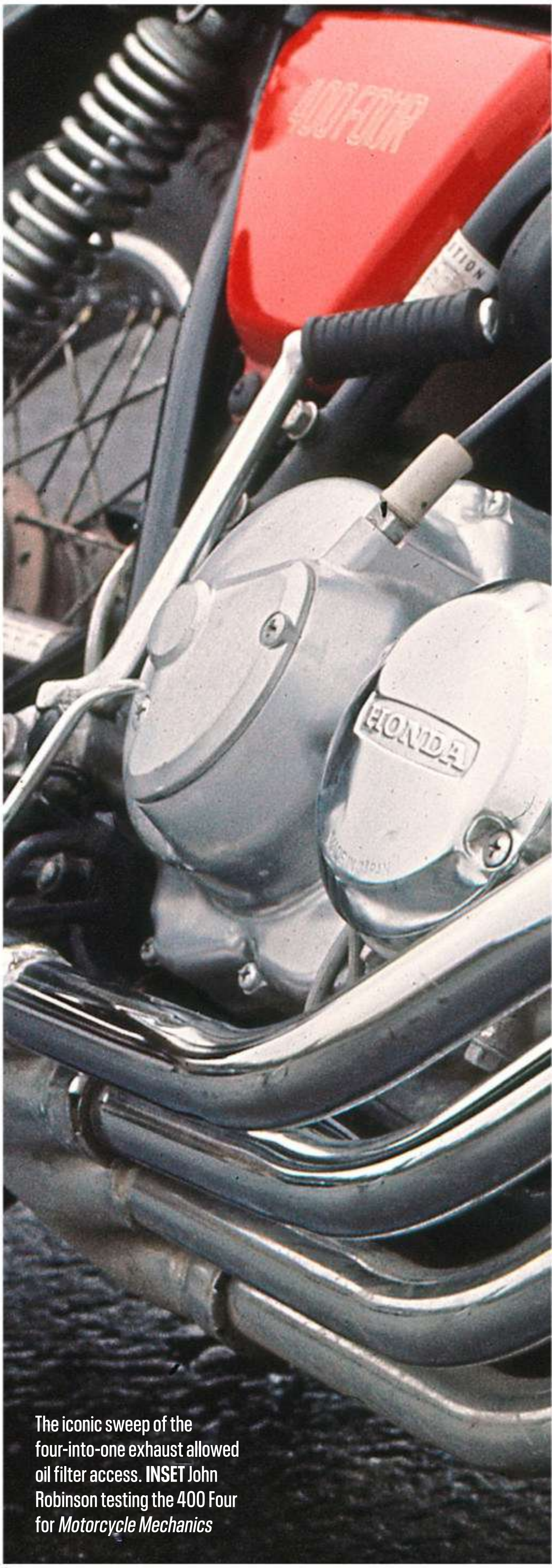
The Honda dealer seminar in Portsmouth on January 20, 1975 must have been an upbeat affair. Bike sales were on a high and there were fresh new models to bring punters into showrooms. The new GL1000 Gold Wing might have been a bike to make onlookers gawp in disbelief, but the CB400/F was about to capture the heart of the motorcyling public. It turned out that a four-cylinder 400 was an ideal blend of glamour and practicality. It still is.

Looks were always part of the 400/Four's appeal. It was lithe and classy – and the sweep of the four-into-one exhaust was sensational.

Swing a leg over the compact four and you're back in the '70s. By modern standards, there's nothing remotely high-tech about Honda's smallest UK-market four (unless you regard indicators and electric start as avant-garde). The suspension is basic, but it works. And it's still smooth, relatively quiet and more than fast enough to excite once the revs hit 7000. It's easy to forget that the Honda is 'just' a 400. With a top speed of almost 104mph recorded by *Bike* magazine during its road test in 1976, the CB is almost as fast as a CB500 – but it's as a total package that the CB400F earned its deserved reputation.

The handling still feels wonderfully reassuring – stable at speed and through fast corners, yet easy to flip-flop through your favourite series of tight bends – especially with the benefit of modern tyres. Even the front brake is effective enough as long as that pesky pivot pin is well looked after.

A well-maintained CB400F will keep going for a long time – as proved by plenty still being used half a century after it first hit the scene. It's not fussy or demanding – it's just a great, practical classic for regular use. And for time travel back to the 1970s.



The iconic sweep of the four-into-one exhaust allowed oil filter access. **INSET** John Robinson testing the 400 Four for *Motorcycle Mechanics*

PRICE GUIDE

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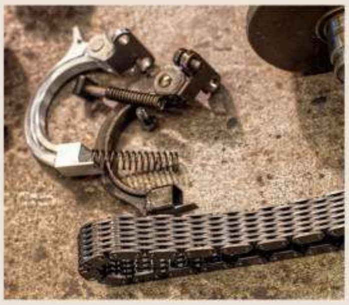
THE BIG QUESTION

Is the camchain tensioner working as it should?

Dave Greenham runs classic Honda specialist D&M Engineering in Newark, Nottinghamshire. The former racer and BSB mechanic has forged an enviable reputation for building fast and reliable bikes since founding the company with his late partner back in 2003.


JASON CRITCHELL

"Camchain tensioner problems are not unknown on '70s-era Hondas – and the CB400F is no exception," he cautions. "The problem on the CB400F is wear in the pivots of the horseshoe-shaped tensioner arm. Eventually, you'll get burrs in the pivot point and the arm will seize up, allowing the camchain to run slack. You can get improved, alloy aftermarket arms with brass-bushed pivots now, but it's an engine strip to fit them

"The camchain adjuster bolt at the front can also seize in the cases if you don't clean and grease it regularly. Look out for stripped threads on the adjuster bolt. They can be repaired with a thread insert, but that's easier to do with the engine out. If you are stripping the engine, I'd advise fitting a new primary drive chain too."

What to look for

Electrics

As on any nearly 50-year-old bike, the electrics can suffer from old age. Check the operation of the lights, indicators and starter motor. Fortunately, just about all electrical components – including looms and replica switchgear – are readily available.

Carbs and airbox

Examine the airbox and carburettor rubbers for cracking – especially on unrestored machines. Replacements are easily sourced, although they can be a bit of a fiddle to fit.

Engine

Overall, a reliable and durable unit, but there are a few things to check for. Listen for a rattle from the camchain or primary drive chain. Both will require an engine stripdown to replace. Head gasket leaks are not uncommon on earlier bikes. Engines from engine number 1084315 onwards have longer head studs and are usually OK.

JASON CRITCHELL

RIGHT Honda GP rider Tommy Robb on the 400 Four at the Isle of Man in 1975

Tinware

Check the mudguards for rot. UK-market rear guards are very hard to find – though you can use a pattern US-market part if you don't mind re-drilling the lower mounting holes for the rear light bracket. Reproduction front guards (£215) and fuel tanks (around £350 in primer) are readily available – if you can run to the cost.

HONDA
SUPER SPORT

Exhaust

One thing you should definitely do is ensure the exhaust system is in good condition. Excellent reproduction systems are available from David Silver Spares – but a full system costs around £670. Many examples will have been fitted with replacement, aftermarket systems too.

Brakes

The pivoting caliper on the front brake is prone to seizing on its pivot pin. Check the brake operates efficiently – and frees off when you release the brake lever. A regular strip, clean and grease of the pivot and pin will keep the problem at bay.

RESOURCES

David Silver Spares
The go-to outfit for NOS and re-manufactured classic Honda spares with literally tonnes on the shelf for Honda CB400Fs.
davidsilverspares.co.uk

D&M Engineering
Specialists in classic Hondas for both road and racing. Engine rebuilds, crank and cylinder head work and loads more.
d-mengineering.co.uk

CMS
Netherlands-based supplier of NOS Honda spares with plenty listed for the CB400F.
cmsnl.com

400 Four Bits
Web-based specialist breaker of CB400Fs.
400fourbits.co.uk

Honda sohc Forum
Lively forum for sohc Hondas with a dedicated section for the CB400F.
sohc.co.uk

Rust to Resto
Lancashire-based classic Honda specialist offering full restorations, engine rebuilds, recommissioning, carburettor rebuilds and servicing.
rusttoresto.co.uk

Honda Classic Restoration Services
NOS and reproduction parts, as well as full and part restorations.
honda-classics.co.uk

MODEL HISTORY

1974 With an engine based on the US-market CB350F (launched in 1972), the 408cc **CB400F** appears at the Earls Court Show. Striking café racer styling and four-into-one exhaust are targeted directly at the European market.

1975 US-market models are restyled with forward-mounted footrests and higher handlebars.

1976 UK-market bikes now have the pillion footrests mounted on a welded loop on the rear subframe instead of on the swingarm. US-market models are coded CB400F1.

1977 Locking fuel filler cap fitted.

1978 CB400F2 replaces the original F model in the UK and Europe. Largely unchanged apart from colour scheme and longer cylinder head studs from engine number 1084315 onwards. It's the last year of the CB400F.

SPECIFICATION
1974 HONDA CB400F

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION	
Type	Air-cooled sohc inline four
Bore and stroke	51 x 50mm
Capacity	408cc
Output (claimed)	37bhp at 8500rpm
Compression ratio	9.4:1
Fuelling	4 x 20mm Keihin carburettors
Clutch	Wet multiplate
Gearbox	Six-speed
CHASSIS	
Frame	Tubular, single downtube cradle type
Front suspension	Telescopic forks
Rear suspension	Twinshock
Brakes	Front 214mm (8.425in) disc, rear 160mm (6.5in) drum
Wheels	Spoked
Tyres	3.00 x 18in front, 3.50 x 18in rear
DIMENSIONS	
Wheelbase	1355mm (53.3in)
Dry weight	170kg (375lb) claimed
PERFORMANCE	
Top speed	103.8mph (*Bike* road test)

Values have dropped, but parts prices have risen. Probably won't dent the 400/4's extensive fanbase, though

Which to buy, what to pay...

There's not a lot of difference in specification between the first F models and the final F2 versions of the CB400. Apart from colours and graphics, the main difference is the provision of extra loops on the rear subframe for the pillion footrest mounts on 1976-on bikes. Which is why prices remain around the same for any variant. First-year models are perhaps slightly more desirable – but still don't make appreciably more than F2s.

The higher handlebars and forward-mounted footrests on American and Canadian-market models from late 1975-on aren't popular here in the UK; selling prices of these models are probably 10% down on UK-market machines. European-market bikes have 398cc engines (achieved by a stroke of 48.8mm rather than 50mm) and a few were imported for racing in the UK's TT Formula Three class. Again, they probably won't make as much as a UK-market machine.

Some period specials may make more than a standard bike, though. Both Surrey's Dixon Racing, and later South London dealer Mocheck, marketed 460cc big-bore specials with hotter cams, performance exhausts, uprated suspension and, in the case of the Mocheck Harrier, alloy CMA wheels, a ported head and lightened crank. Survivors are few and rarely come to market, but a Mocheck Harrier in top condition might make over £8000.

Apart from such rare exotica, though, a bike in standard condition is probably the best buy. And the good news for buyers is that, in company with most classic bikes at the moment, prices have come down from the peaks of a few years ago. While a mint, standard UK-market F model might have made £6000-7000 five years ago, you shouldn't have to pay more than £5000 for an excellent restored machine.

If you can afford to splash out on a nicely restored bike with a rebuilt engine, it'll be cheaper in the long run than buying a resto project – or a running 'fixer-upper'. Even if you can tackle most work yourself, while bike prices have definitely fallen, the cost of quality replacement parts and specialist services have risen significantly.

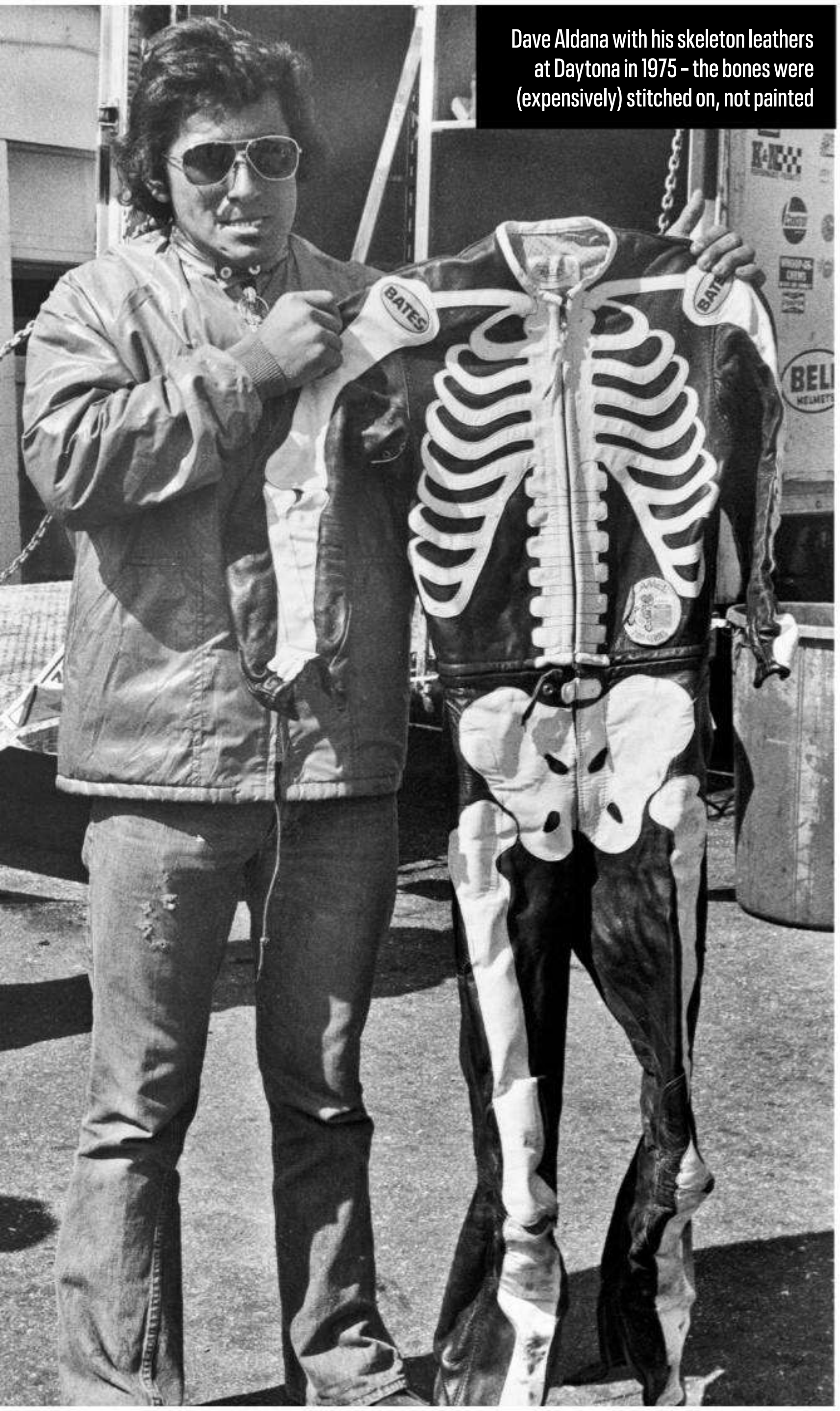
A front brake caliper would have set you back £47 in 2012, but now they're £129. Big-end bearing shells have gone from £7.50 to £11.92 and fuel tanks have gone up £100 over the same time, for example. And a complete engine rebuild by a reputable specialist could cost as much as £5000, according to D&M Engineering's Dave Greenham.

However, just about everything you'll need to keep a CB400F purring along is still available. And, if you can find a good bike with a recent engine rebuild – with new camchain and tensioner, and primary drive chain – you shouldn't have to spend too much on parts for quite some time. CB

FEBRUARY

A bone to pick

On the 50th anniversary of **David Aldana** debuting the most famous leathers in racing, we caught up with him and dispelled some myths


Dave Aldana with his skeleton leathers at Daytona in 1975 – the bones were (expensively) stitched on, not painted

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

"There was an AMA rule that you couldn't have black leathers because if you fell down in a night race, with the circuit lighting they had back in the 60s and 70s, it was so bad that they couldn't find you," Aldana explains to us over the phone. "You had to have opposing colours. I remember that phrase distinctly."

Between the '74 and '75 seasons, Aldana was sat at home, having tried and failed to get sponsors to help pay for his new leathers, when he came up with an idea.

"I always watched *The Little Rascals*, which was a half-hour programme with kids doing all kinds of mischievous things. They had a skit where they got in front of a big black sheet, and all the characters were in some sort of black jumpsuit, with a roughly-painted skeleton on them. The guys were dancing against this black sheet, so you could only see the white part of the costume. I said: 'A-ha, this is what I'm going to do!'"

He bought a cardboard skeleton decoration, the type where the main bones are pinned together so they move from side-to-side, and took it to Bates Leathers.

"The guy took my measurements and said: 'OK, what do you want on the leathers? Champion Spark Plug or your name or something?' I said: 'I just want this...' and I opened up the bag and unravelled the five-foot-tall skeleton – and he started laughing."

The bones were stitched on, not painted as some contemporary reports stated. It was also reported that the leathers got Aldana banned when he wore them at the Houston season opener in 1975 – but he revealed to us that wasn't actually true.

"A lot of people thought the [ban] was about the leather suit. In fact, it was for rough riding," Aldana admits. "I knocked down this guy named Jimmy Odom trying to make the main event, but I didn't let the facts get in the way of a good story."

The AMA held a hearing, and Floyd Emde and Kenny Roberts acted as character witnesses for Aldana, explaining to the panel how difficult it is to pass cleanly in a short-track event. He was put on probation for 59 days, but was back in time for Daytona.

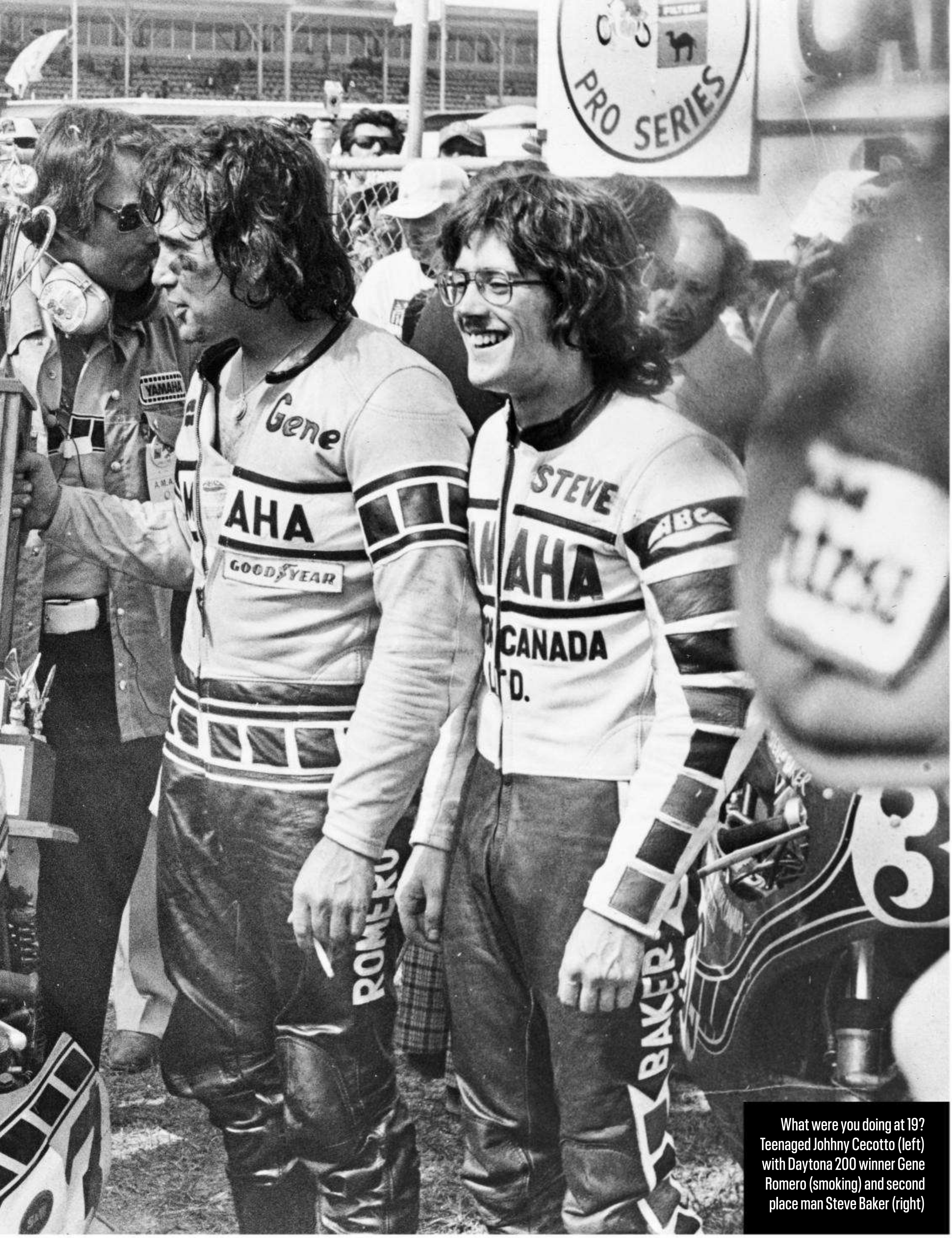
Aldana, now in his 70s and still racing(and winning) AHRMA dirt-track events, now has his suits made by Alpinestars. "That first suit cost me 700 bucks, but I never had to buy another set of leathers again." CB

75

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

MARCH

Johnny who?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What were you doing at 19? Teenaged Johnny Cecotto (left) with Daytona 200 winner Gene Romero (smoking) and second place man Steve Baker (right)

Fifty years ago, an unknown teenager called **Johnny Cecotto** blitzed a star-studded Daytona 200 field on a standard TZ700. A month later, he won his debut Grand Prix, and then the 350cc World Championship

Words **MAT OXLEY**

On March 9, 1975, Johnny Cecotto shocked everyone by putting his year-old TZ700 on the front row of the Daytona 200, alongside Kenny Roberts, Gene Romero, Teuvo Länsivuori and Steve Baker. All were riding the faster TZ750.

Then disaster struck. "On the starting grid an official saw something leaking from my bike, so they pushed me off the grid," says the Venezuelan. "My mechanic fixed the problem immediately, but they wouldn't let me back onto the grid. They said I must start last – after the two groups of 40 riders had gone. So I started 80th and finished third."

His GP debut, a few weeks later at France's Circuit Paul Ricard, was even more spectacular. He won the 250GP, passing factory Yamaha rider Ikujiro Takai on the last lap, then ran away with the 350 race, beating Agostini by more than 20 seconds.

"It seemed natural to me – I was winning races in South America, so I thought it was the same. The plan was only to do a few GPs, then go home to Venezuela, because we didn't have enough budget for the whole season. Winning both races in France was a bit unexpected! After that it was like a bomb exploded in Venezuela and we found the sponsorship to stay in Europe for the whole season."

In July 1975, Cecotto secured the 350cc title, which Ago had made his own since 1968. He also took fourth

RIGHT A young Cecotto reflects at the Imola 200 in April 1974...

101
YAMAHA
VENEMOTOS C.A

MICK WOOLETT

BELOW 1975 was the first of his three wins in the Imola 200

'The official said I must start last. So I started 80th and finished third'

VENEZUELA
YAMAHA
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96
Castrol
VENEMOTOS
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JAN HEESE

YAMAHA

JAN HEESE

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BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

ABOVE French 350cc GP, Paul Ricard, March 1975. He won

LEFT The podium of the French 250cc GP, Paul Ricard, March 1975. He won that too

LEFT Johnny and Barry, in Sheene's Rolls-Royce

in the 250 championship, despite breaking down in three GPs while leading. "A pity, because it could've been two championships in our first season."

That remarkable year seemed like the perfect launch pad for a stellar GP career, but the 1970s were a particularly cruel time to be a motorcycle racer. During that decade no fewer than 25 riders lost their lives at Grand Prix events, including Jarno Saarinen, Renzo Pasolini and Santiago Herrero.

Johnny survived the decade – but only just. His GP career was marred by horrific accidents, horrendous injuries and mechanical disasters. The Venezuelan's six years chasing world championship glory spanned 96 GP races, but he failed to start 20 due to injury – and failed to finish 27, mostly due to mechanical gremlins.

Without such appalling luck, Cecotto would almost certainly have won more than two world titles – the 1975 350GP and 1978 F750. Along the way, he won 14 GPs (three 500s, nine 350s and two 250s) and eight F750 races. Not bad a haul, considering.

Cecotto also got to race in GP racing's coolest decade, when racers were rock 'n' roll stars – risking life and limb one weekend, the next weekend partying like no racers before or since. Cecotto got up to mischief with all the usual suspects: Barry Sheene, Marco Lucchinelli, Greg Hansford and Takazumi Katayama.

"They were very good times; we had a lot of fun, it was fantastic – completely different to racing now," says Cecotto. "Barry and I often travelled together and did many crazy, stupid things, especially against [Giacomo] Agostini. He wasn't very happy with us!

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

LEFT Daytona 200, 1976. Cecotto with the trophy and the podium girls after winning at the second attempt

RIGHT Preparing his monoshock TZ750 at Daytona in 1976

BELOW Daytona 200, 1976. Kenny Roberts is already out of shot, but Cecotto (#5) won. Gary Nixon (#9) was second and Pat Hennen (#40) finished third

SPEEDWAY
DAYTONA
DAYTONA USA
58
9
385
2
5
3
351
33
32

MICK WOOLETT

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

Both 19-year-old Cecotto and 24-year-old Sheene became superstars in 1975; rookie Cecotto astonishing the GP regulars with his speed, while Sheene won his first 500GP. They were the cool young punks, while Ago' was racing's grand old man.

"He was older than us and we did stupid things to him that he didn't like," Cecotto adds with a chuckle. "I remember once in a discotheque in Imatra, me and Barry soaked him in water – he didn't like it."

When Cecotto was a youngster he read papers and magazines that brought news of Ago's relentless domination of GP racing to South America.

"Agostini was winning the 350 and 500 titles every year; then Saarinen arrived and could beat him. Saarinen was my idol, then he was killed at Monza [during the 1973 Italian GP]. By then we were already talking about going to Europe and my aim was to beat Agostini."

Cecotto came from a racing family. His parents were Italian immigrants, his father a car mechanic and motorcycle racer who won the Venezuelan 500 title on a Norton Manx. Cecotto grew up in his dad's workshop in the capital city of Caracas, tinkering with cars and bikes – but mostly the latter.

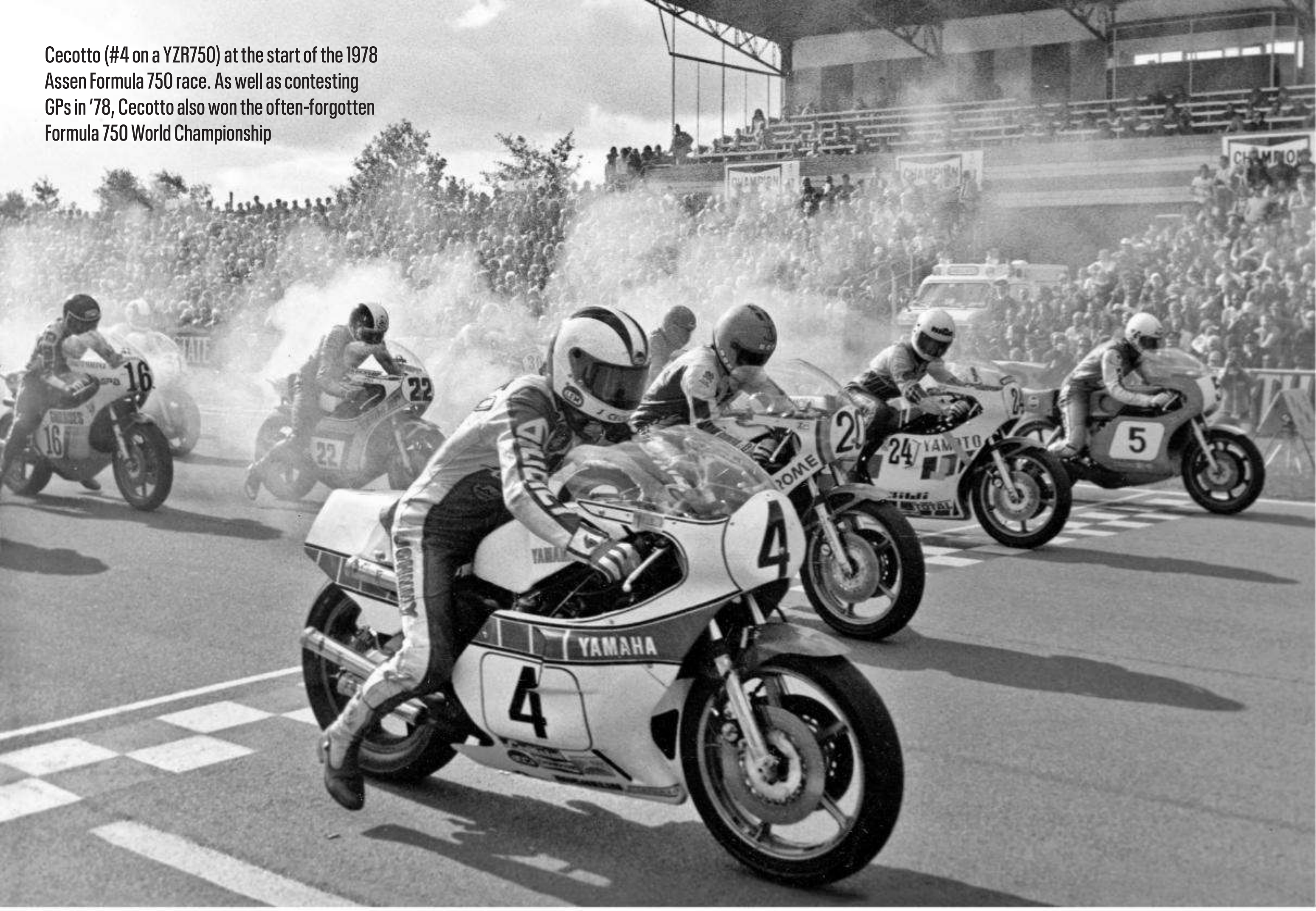
"I started riding on the road – minibikes, then a Honda 175 and a Yamaha 350. I was a little crazy – getting experience! Friends brought their bikes to me to fix and tune, so when I was 16 I had some money to buy a Honda CB750 four. I went to the circuit at San Carlos to watch riders practicing. At the end of the day, a few of them went back out on road bikes. I went out too – and could stay with them, easy. When we stopped, one of the guys said: 'You're going well, will you do the race here next week?'.

"I said: 'No', but the next morning I woke up and said: 'I want to race'. I had to get my father to sign a form for my race licence, but he was too busy in his workshop. I went back to him many times and I remember him throwing spanners at me – 'Don't disturb me!' Finally, he signed the form."

Cecotto rode back to San Carlos for his first race, but struggled to push-start the big 750. "I was completely

BELOW Cecotto with Barry's mum Iris, at Sheene's Wisbech home

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE


Cecotto (#4 on a YZR750) at the start of the 1978 Assen Formula 750 race. As well as contesting GPs in '78, Cecotto also won the often-forgotten Formula 750 World Championship

last, then I caught the others, went on passing bikes and got up to third, when the chain snapped."

That's natural talent; an innate feeling for the limit, for the tyres, the engine and chassis, and a perfect conversation between rider, machine and racetrack.

The 16-year-old raced the CB some more and then a Kawasaki 750 triple. That brought him to the attention of Venezuelan Yamaha importer Andrea Ippolito, who gave him an air-cooled Yamaha TR3 350 twin to contest the 1973 national championship, against that year's brand-new and much faster water-cooled TZ350s. Cecotto won the title anyway.

"That year I bought a new helmet and wanted to paint it like Saarinen's. I started painting. Then, wait a second! I need to have my own design, so I took the arrows he had at the back of his helmet and put two at the front, so they looked like two horns."

The following year, Cecotto ventured out of South America for the first time, riding the 350 in the Daytona and Imola 200-mile races. The following year – 1975 – saw him become a world champion. No surprise that Suzuki came knocking at his door, asking him to partner Barry Sheene in its factory 500 GP team, riding the latest RG500 square-four.

"I got an offer from Suzuki, but because of everything Ippolito had done for me I had to say: 'Thank you very much, but, no'. For sure this was a big mistake."

At least luck was on his side – just! – at the 1976 Daytona 200. Now a factory Yamaha rider, he battled for the lead with 'King' Kenny Roberts, until the American suffered a tyre blowout. Cecotto won the race, his rear tyre down to its cords. Another lap or two and he too would have had a blowout.

PIETRO SANNA

LEFT Johnny resting up after a leg injury in 1978

BELOW A Suzuki ride in the second leg of Silverstone's 1975 F750 GP. He'd won the first leg on a Yamaha, but ran out of spares

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

The plan for 1976 was the 350 and 500 titles. “But we had a year-old factory 500 and a lot of problems. We went testing at Misano, and my mechanics tried a wider front tyre. After two or three laps the plastic brake hoses wore through, so I had no brakes at the end of the back straight – big crash and a big concussion. I wasn’t in good shape for a long time.”

Why so many technical problems? “Just a lot of bad luck and maybe some mechanic failure.” Even so, Cecotto still finished second in the 1976 350 championship, behind Harley-Davidson’s Walter Villa.

1977 promised more: a latest-spec factory Yamaha 500 and a 350. He won both races at the Venezuelan season opener, then travelled to Austria, for round two at the notoriously dangerous Salzburgring.

“I was fighting for the lead in the 350 race with Franco Uncini [who went on to win the 1982 500 title with Suzuki]. In the fast right at the top of the hill I was very, very close to him, because I wanted to out-brake him at the next corner. He had a big slide through the fast right. I tried to avoid him and went off the track, completely into the Armco. A lot of other riders crashed and Hans Stadelmann died. I broke my arm – the bone was out of the skin, so I lost most of the season. It was tough. The year before, two guys were killed at Mugello, so it wasn’t unusual. It happened many times. OK, you thought about it but you didn’t think about it too much.”

‘The hoses wore through… so no brakes at the end of the straight’

This time, Cecotto was out for three months. On his return, he won two 500 GPs to finish the year fourth overall. “I could’ve won the ’77 500 title; that Yamaha was good. It was easy for me to win those races.”

In 1978, Cecotto for the first time focused solely on 500GPs and F750. “I liked a lot of power, so the 750 was my favourite bike and I wasn’t interested in 250s. From 350s up, yes.”

He beat Roberts to the F750 title and finished behind the American and Sheene in that year’s 500 championship. F750 events were usually 200-mile epics – either one race, with fuel stops, or split into two 100-mile legs. “The 200-mile races were fantastic and I won many of them: Imola, Daytona, Paul Ricard, Assen. I loved the speed of the 750 – it was a difficult bike to handle and control, so it was fantastic for me. Daytona was just incredible! I didn’t like the refuelling so much – it was very dangerous. I remember once at Assen, fuel went everywhere, so I jumped off the bike because it could’ve been a big fire.”

After 1978, it was all downhill. Another rider rammed into him at the second GP of 1979, giving him a knee injury that put him out of action for another three months. No wonder he had had enough of bikes.

When Cecotto had Ayrton Senna worried

Cecotto began his car-racing career in 1980, weaving four-wheel outings around his bike GP duties. “After all this shit and problems and injuries, maybe it was time to change. My aim was to arrive in F1, so I couldn’t wait too long. In 1980 I did three F2 races. I did the motorbike GP at Zolder [Belgium] and the weekend after I did F2 there. It was so funny, because in a car the track was completely different - I didn’t even recognise it from riding bikes!”

Cecotto achieved his F1 dream in 1983, driving a Theodore Cosworth V8. The team was skint and the car was slow, but he scored points in only his second F1 race - that innate feel for speed again. The following year he moved to Toleman, alongside a young F1 rookie called Ayrton Senna.

“I signed after Ayrton and he had been signed as Toleman’s number one driver. He had a new fuel-injected engine and I had the 1983 engine. The difference between them was huge, but I didn’t care so much about ’84 because I had some very good possibilities for ’85, with Brabham, McLaren, Williams and Ferrari.”

The Toleman team-mates got on well… until they went testing at Donington Park. “There was only one car, so he drove, then me, then him, changing many times. At the end of the day, I managed to be a little bit faster than him, so of course that was the end of our friendship.

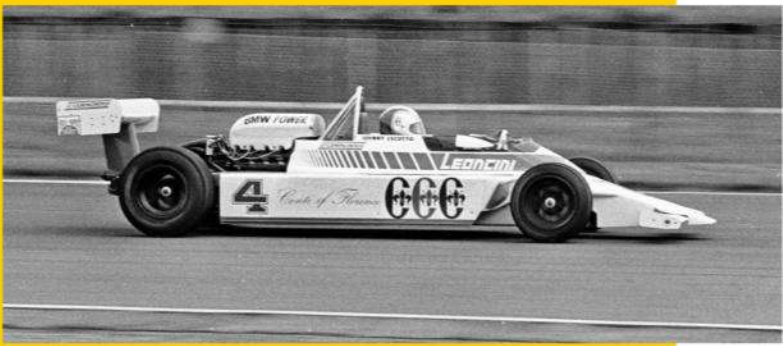
“Two or three years before his accident [Senna was killed at Imola in 1994], he was asked which of his team-mates gave him the most pressure. He said: ‘Johnny Cecotto’.”

Cecotto’s F1 dream ended during the 1984 British GP at Brands Hatch. Toleman was building him a new car, but it wasn’t completed until a few hours before first practice. “On my second lap, something happened with the rear suspension - the car turned left, into the Armco. It was one of the first carbon-fibre monocoques and it just exploded. I ended up in the middle of the track, almost sitting on the asphalt, with nothing in front of me. Both my legs were completely destroyed, so that was the end of my Formula 1 career.”

Cecotto underwent multiple operations in London, where surgeons considered amputating his right foot, and more surgeries in Germany.

He returned to racing a year later. Over the next decade and a half, he enjoyed numerous Touring Car and GT car successes. Arguably his greatest four-wheel achievements were victories in the Spa-Francorchamps and Nürburgring 24-hour races.

“When I was young, I enjoyed motorbikes - but after that I enjoyed cars very much too.”



In the March BMW 802 Formula Two car at Silverstone in 1980

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

75

APRIL

Pieces of eight

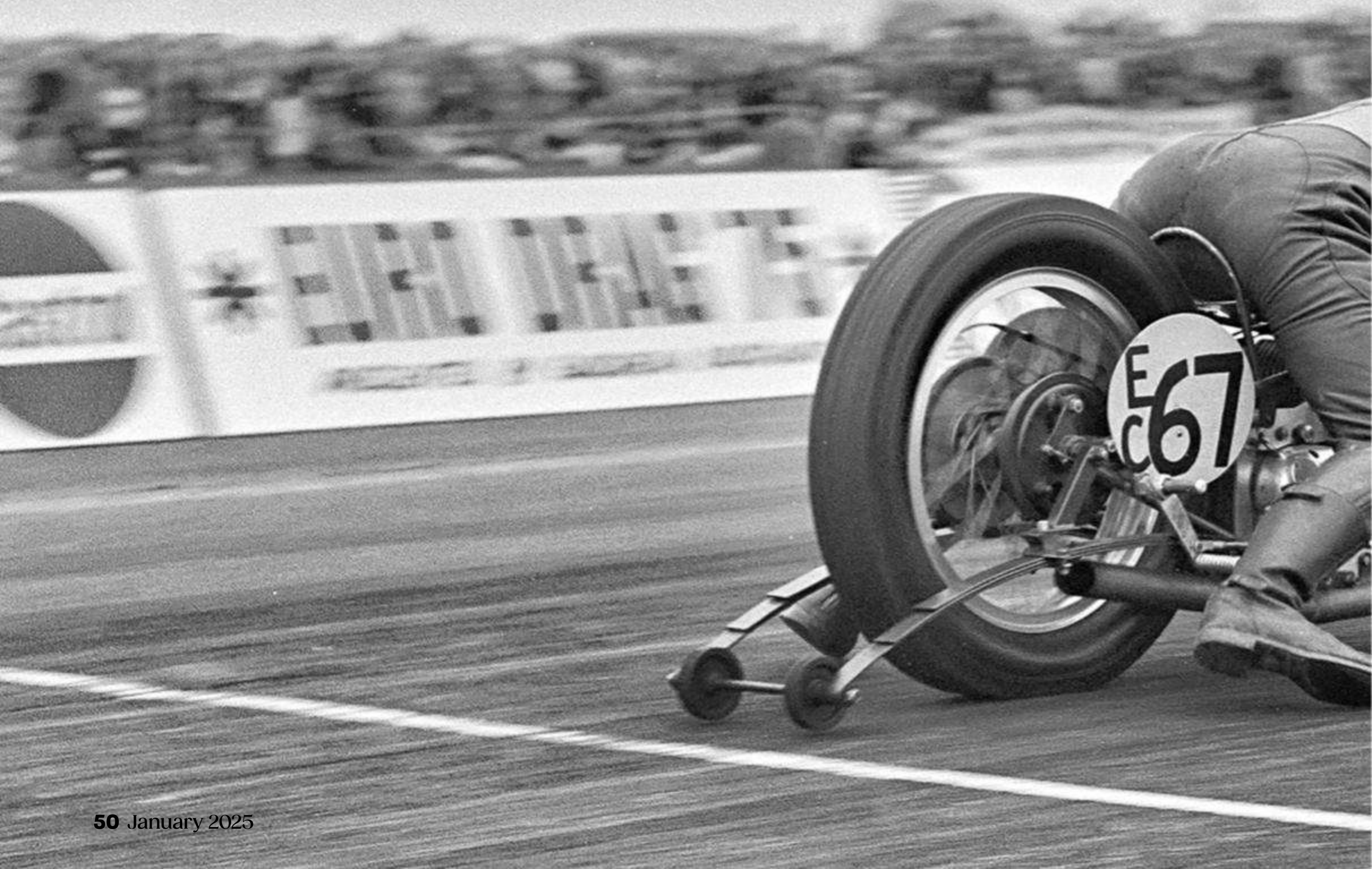
For 1975, Britain's top drag racers had their sights set on running the first eight-second time by a European rider. The season kicked off at Blackbushe airfield on April 13...

Photography **KEITH LEE**

First introduced in 1975, the *MCN* Top Bike Championship was to be held across five different venues – and kicked off on the notoriously difficult Blackbushe airfield track on April 13. While some racers were busy with new and improved machinery, incorporating the new breed of slider clutches and two-speed transmissions, mated to ever-wider rear slicks, not all were headed down that route.

On the other hand, the likes of Brian Chapman were continuing to coax more out of their smaller capacity bikes like his little blown 500cc Vincent Comet in their own methodical way. And at the part-time venues, the more powerful machines could easily be undone by overpowering. John Hobbs was the most talked about rider, as he feverishly worked to complete the new double Weslake Hobbit, but it would be a full two months before he made his debut.

Keith Parnell was out and ready to impress, with his blown 750 Triumph sporting an extended frame, to tame the wheelies. He served notice of his intentions, by setting a new Blackbushe track record of 9.49s. In just a few weeks, he would take the coveted prize for becoming the first to smash into the eight-second bracket. At Blackbushe, though, he was bettered by



BELOW Brian Chapman powers his supercharged Vincent single up the Blackbushe strip in April 1975

Chapman's quick 9.55s/146mph blast in the semi finals. Derrick Penfold proved to be the surprise package in the eliminations. He pulled a holeshot on Tony Weeden first, and then overcame the rapid 1000cc double Norton of Mick Butler, which slowed with a motor issue.

In the final, underdog Penfold pulled another fine holeshot – and looked like he could be headed for an unexpected win. Unfortunately for him, the Chapman Vincent raced past him to take the victory, as Penfold's Triumph shed its blower belt!

A most interesting entry to appear was the BM 900 bike of Ray Baskerville and Pete Miller. They cast and machined their own engine assembly, slider clutch and two-speed unit for this true one-off racer.

The year lived up to expectations, with close racing, record times and added spice from visits by two of the top American racers, in the form of TC Christenson and Danny Johnson. Brian Chapman's winning start, and consistent pace throughout the season, led to him becoming the worthy 1975 *MCN* champion.

Despite his very late appearance in mid-June, John Hobbs amazingly managed to grab the championship runner-up spot, as he overcame his initially ill-handling new twin-engined machine – and sealed his place as the quickest and fastest European rider, with 8.47s/173mph records that would have been undreamed of just a few short months before. CB

LEFT Keith Parnell on the 'Rouge et Noir' Triumph 750 set a new track record before getting into the eight-second zone later in the year

RIGHT Pete Miller on the BM 900 with self-cast and machined engine assembly

'The Chapman Vincent raced past Penfold to take the victory, as his Triumph shed its blower belt!'

75

MAY

When Brits went electric

In 1975 the **Norton Commando** and **Triumph Trident** finally got electric starters – but it was too little, too late. This is the road test published in the the May '75 issue of *Bike* magazine

bike
MAY 1975 30p
ALL YOUR OWN WORK
New keep-you-moving series
MORINI 350: THE LITTLEST V-TWIN
BIKES THAT DIED TOO SOON
CLASSICS, CUSTOMS, BIG INCH RACERS
ELECTRIC BRITISH
GIANT TEST

electric british giant test

The test you've all been waiting for in which Bill Haylock and Phil Mather take Norton-Triumph's new hopes down the road apiece and come back smiling. Pix by Bob Carlos Clarke

IT'S BEEN a long time since we sampled a standard British roadster; two years almost to the day in fact, when Mark Williams put the then new Norton 850 through its paces. Since that time we've been watching and waiting — and hoping.

While we sated ourselves on exotic foreign machinery the state of our home industry, and at times their products, seemed to be going from bad to worse, so when the Norton Triumph combine finally released its latest models in the UK we were particularly interested to see how they would measure up in today's vicious competition stakes. Were the Norton twin and Triumph triple still able to uphold their one-time contention for superbike status, or were these latest models merely further variations on a worn out theme? Did, in fact, the British industry have anything left to offer a highly discerning public with little time for such niceties as brand loyalty and patriotism?

The road tester's lot, it seemed, is not always a happy one. Here was the time when personal sympathies had to be put to one side, insidious rumours discounted in a firm resolve to uncover the real truth behind two bikes upon whose reception so much depended. Much more of this and we'll have the basis of a human interest, real life drama big enough to topple Crossroads from its peak viewing slot. ▶

847N
KAA 846N
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Reprinted from *Bike* magazine,
May 1975

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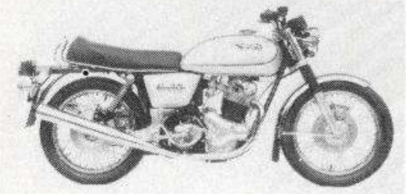

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norton
Commando Mk3

ANDOVER on a cold, damp Thursday morning: about as uninspiring as any place can be. The weatherman promised snow but we already had more than enough rain, thank you very much. By eleven-thirty the only bright spot so far had been when ace cameraman and travelling companion Bob Carlos Clarke wandered off down the lurching corridor train in search of the smallest room. Within a minute of his disappearance the train pulled into Andover station and *Bike's* road-test duo were gripped with the cold fear realisation that they were en route to the grand, all British, all electric, front cover photo session without a photographer. A little old lady came to our assistance as we rushed an assortment of equipment and riding gear onto the platform. A porter slammed the carriage door, the train ground away in one direction — and Bob shambled up in the other, grinning. Bet he flushed while he was in the station.

Commando, to a lot of people, is a dirty word. There isn't anything that hasn't gone at some time or other; head gaskets, cranks, exhaust systems — you name it, sooner or later it's blown, broken or fallen off. I'd only ever ridden a Norton twin on a couple of occasions, never owned one; everything I'd heard was second or third hand, not exactly a sound basis for constructive criticism (but food for thought perhaps?). On the other hand, what I'd seen looked good; Commandos blasting this way and that, a healthy exhaust note and an unmistakably British look.

To dismiss the Mk 3 as just another Commando (yawn) was obviously out of the question. There were too many changes to last year's specifications, too many great big galloping strides forward to cross it off as yet another variation on Bert Hopwood's original theme. It was time for the good old open minded approach. Andover station, the state of the nation, the weather and all else aside.

The only snag was, of course, that despite all the intriguing new bits and pieces and my enthusiasm for the truth above all else, the Mk 3 Commando looked unmistakably like last year's Mk 2a, the Mk 2 before that and etc, etc.

Lesson no. 1: don't be fooled by appearances. There are somewhere in the region of 150 new or changed parts on the 1975 model which all in all add up to one hell of a bike. For the first time in several years the Commando is able to compete on an even basis with all the other bigsters at the upper end of the market, it's no longer a second rate alternative to a *real* supabike. If you'd been down in Andover during the rainy season you would have seen what I mean.

I'll kick off with the obvious, though since last month's Ducati test I'm already on tricky ground. (Look it up later will ya, I'm up for three speeding offences in half an hour's time and they don't like you to be late.) The Norton has an electric starter; it says so on the side panels and if you nose around behind the barrels you'll see the gizmo itself, the addition being more apparent from the left hand side where the gear drive drops into the primary chain case.

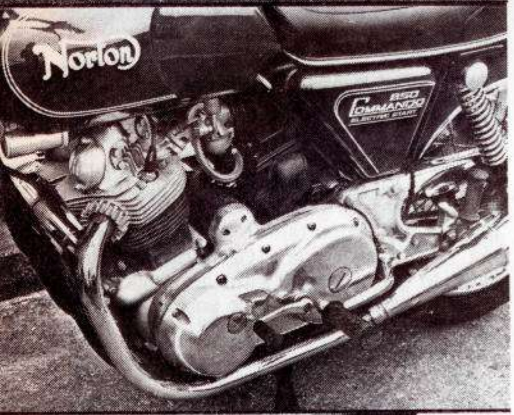
The unit is solenoid operated and manufactured by Prestolite (press-to-light, get it?) in the USA. Finger-tip control comes from the new US standard layout green-for-go button on the right bar, the starter is powered by a heavy duty Yuasa battery, and that in turn is kept fighting fit by a 120 watt Lucas alternator.

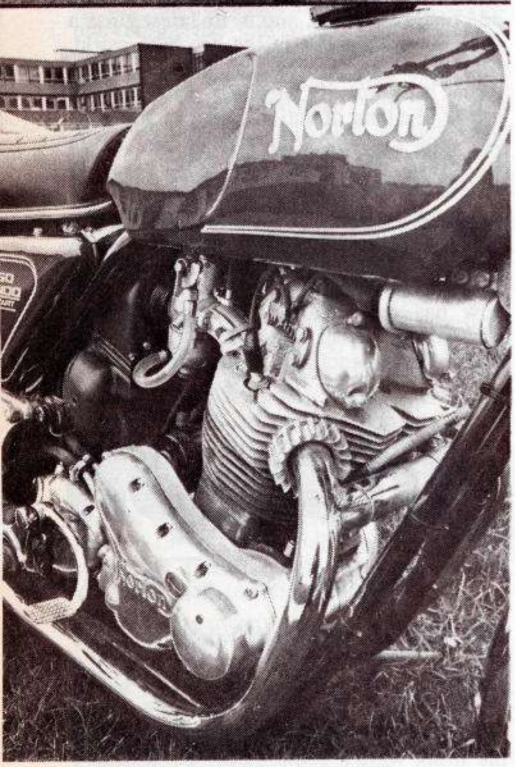
It couldn't have been more than a couple of days before I climbed aboard the beast itself that we received a rather unsettling letter from an American reader. To wit, he had heard (same old problem) down at the local bike shop that the Norton's electric starter wouldn't turn the motor until the mill had been fully run in. Maybe somebody was out to make a few easy dollars — first buy a Norton, spread the rumour amongst the Jap bike and Harley owners, take on a few bets and then clean up. Sure's there's a little piece tucked away in the handbook that recommends freeing the engine with the foot lever before cold starts, but I didn't get round to reading it until the test bike was long gone and I hadn't noticed any problems. On the grottiest of mornings, with the mercury in the minus zone, there was always a slight hesitancy as the first piston came up onto compression, but with flooded carbs and full choke a second prod at the button set things in motion.

Another obvious newie is the left hand gear change, right hand rear brake and the standardised (that'll send shivers down a few spines) shift pattern. Although shifting is now up for up, down for down, the basic box internals haven't altered and the feel at the lever, a long, definite action, remains very very British. Those weened on nimble toed Nippon changes may find themselves missing a few cogs; personally (here comes a blatant all-out bid for life membership of the NOC) I thought the action complemented the overall style of the machine and with gobs of torque available at the twist of the wrist there was a total absence of the multi-cylindered fussy urgency that has made modern biking such a frenzied affair.

The relocation of the gear lever has been effected by an internal crossover shaft running to the front of the main gear-box assembly, emerging through the primary chain case just forward of the clutch. This has meant that at long last the gear-box is a fixed unit, although still of separate construction, with engine and gearbox centres remaining constant. Chain tension is maintained hydraulically, and in an effort to "improve oil sealing" — what a pity the brochure doesn't carry the conviction of actually *achieving* oil sealing — the case outer cover is held in place by peripheral screws. At least somebody's been taking notice of all the waterproof boot

KAA 846N
Norton





Top: Commando's lines remain unaltered but closer inspection reveals . . .
Centre: Electric starter nestles behind motor and drives directly into new style primary case. Gearchange exits forward of clutch.

argy-bargy, and if you really must know the truth, it works, dammit, it really works. In fact, while we're on that age old topic of conversation, it gives me great pleasure to announce, gentlemen, that the merest hint of lubrication on the outside could only be found at the junction of the rev counter cable and the crankcase, and only then after continuous high speed cruising.

Which brings us rather neatly to the Norton in its element, bopping down the blacktop in reassuringly confident style. The power characteristics of the motor reminded me of the Harley Sportster we tested in December '74 — the torque is absolutely unbelievable, catapulting the machine off the line, making constant gear-changing in search of a power-band unnecessary. A total of 58 horses are developed just below six grand, after which the slugging momentum drops off noticeably although not before the speedo has registered a very healthy ton-plus figure. After riding the Commando on the street I'll have to admit that the speed trap findings came as something of an initial disappointment. On long stretches of open motorway the extremely wide American specification handlebars left the rider stretched like a sheet in a gale force wind, so in a bid to reduce fatigue and a permanent death lock on the hand grips I was obliged to keep things down to a sane, and would you believe it, legal level. However, scratching back from Norton Triumph International's Kitts Green establishment with Bill Haylock on the new Trident, I could find absolutely nothing lacking in either performance or handling and at no time was the Norton obviously outclassed by the amazingly swift Triumph three.

Undoubtedly the Isolastic engine mounting set-up raised more than a few eyebrows when it was first introduced, but that's hardly surprising when you consider the long-standing reputation of the Featherbed frame it had to follow. Nowadays it's something we take for granted but even so changes have been made in order to iron out the last of the bugs. The Isolastic rubbers are now bonded together to prevent shifting, and the original shimming method of adjustment — a ridiculous imposition, no doubt born of afterthought, to place on any owner — has been superceded by a lockable thread.

As is to be expected, while the Isolastics absorb all the engine's high frequency vibration, slow idle judder is quite pronounced despite the addition of a spring loaded support to the head steady. At first the sensation of the motor quivering around at tickover is er, rather strange, but a little high speed ear 'oling soon sets your mind at rest about everything being according to plan. Besides, try blipping the throttle on a BMW at standstill — if you're the nervous type that really is food for thought.

The 850cc power unit, regularly the root cause of much gnashing of teeth, has been given new, thicker walled crankcases and main bearing widths have been extended. The Commando crank assembly, a forged steel bolt-up affair running in roller bearings, has long been regarded as the height of notoriety, although in fact the reputation was earned by the earlier 750s. Relying on two bearings for support, it inevitably whipped at high revs and overstressed the edges of the bearing rollers. The adoption of FAG Superblend bearings, the rollers of which have a slight taper thus eliminating line contact, overcame the problem and now even the crank itself has been beefed up. Con rods are shot peened to eliminate surface nicks.

Looking back through past road tests it's quite remarkable how performance figures have been falling off year by year. Was a time when the 750 Norton nudged the 120 miles per line, but in common with most contemporary machines the latest, larger twin is well down in the speed stakes. Obviously it's carrying a lot of extra weight, some 50 lbs in fact, and stringent overseas anti-noise and pollution requirements have a lot to answer for. The engine breathing system recycles oil mist first through the oil tank and then via a separator into the induction system, the small amount of remaining oil being passed directly into the inlet manifold forward of the carburettors. The moulded plastic air filter box is designed for maximum inlet noise suppression, the filter itself being an oil wetted foam element.

The exhaust silencers are billed as being "superquiet", which couldn't be nearer the truth. Identical units are fitted to the Trident, but while they give the three a rather satisfying raspiness — to onlookers at least — they reduce the Commando's note to a very mediocre mumble, totally inaudible to the rider encapsulated in a full face helmet. At the other end of the system, the pipe flanges have been replaced by spherical swaged ends to allow unstressed pipe alignment and bring an end to the constantly recurring loose pipe bugbear.

When you consider how apathetically the Norton twin has been projected in the past (aren't the changes we've already discussed enough indication of a long neglected potential?) it's so refreshing to see evidence that every last aspect of the machine has been given consideration in the light of current market trends, technical advances, and plain old owner requirements. For once we haven't been served up with last year's model (faults an' all) in a simply different colour, with a different seat or a different silencer.

One such example is the introduction of a rear disc brake, a Norton Lockheed item identical to that already mounted up front. The foot pedal is pivoted on the footrest support arm and is connected directly to the combined master cylinder and hydraulic fluid reservoir. The hoses to both brakes are armour protected and the connections have been routed neatly and well out of harm's way. The old drum rear stopper was never anything to write home about: like so many things, it worked and that was deemed sufficient, but thanks to a characteristically heavy lever pressure the rear disc is capable ▶

Continues on page 58

bike
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of rapid yet safe retardation. A very pleasant side to the braking is that at low to medium speeds you don't get hauled unceremoniously to a tyre squealing halt with your passenger flattened against your back and your bum thrust a good six inches onto the top of the tank, while braking in the heat of a high speed moment is as effective as hitting the brick wall you will be fortunate enough to miss.

The front brake caliper is now mounted on the leading edge of the fork slider and the whole unit has been switched over to the left hand side. A reason has been given for both changes, yet while the cynical will maintain that the forks have simply been turned through 180 degrees for the hell of it, it would require the knowledge of a braking, handling and turbulence characteristics expert to get to the bottom of the matter, particularly since one of the reasons is a direct contradiction of current practice on the Trident stablemate.

The left hand mounting is supposed to improve steering balace in conjunction with the right side mounting of the rear disc. Fair enough. The forward mounting is supposed to prevent the accumulation of road grit inside the caliper with resultant excessive wear on the pads. Certainly this was a fault with the previous set-up, pad wear being increased by as much as 80 per cent in bad weather conditions with the additional horror show aspect of it being possible to eject pads under braking if wear hadn't been regularly monitored and new pads fitted in time. The wiper blades that are rumoured to be in the offing would end the controversy once and for all, but they were not evident on our test bike. Over to you, Mr Expert.

Further requirements dictated by American law can be found at either end of the handlebars. The control switch units are of a new design finished in flat back with the various switch functions engraved and picked out in white to comply with US legislation. On the right above the starter button is a red ignition cut-out, and the headlight / parking light switch. The brake lever is of polished forged aluminium forming an integral part of the handlebar unit which also includes the master cylinder and reservoir. Rear view mirrors screw directly into either unit and although they weren't fitted to the test bike they are listed as standard equipment.

Bottom left is a combined horn / headlight flasher button which is mercifully easy to locate in a hurry, turn indicator switch and hi/lo (uuugh! what price patriotism now, my friends?) selector. Even though all the switches and buttons are located at the back of the units, they don't look particularly waterproof; in view of the thoughtful rubber ignition lock shroud and steering lock bung I'd have expected something a little more secure against the elements despite the fact that throughout the rain sodden test period no problems were experienced. The twistgrip, by the by, has a quick action operation and both throttle and clutch cables are nylon lined for sooper smoothness.

Four warning lights are sited on a panel between the speedo and rev counter, latest addition to the original line-up being the neutral indicator coloured green. Main beam warning light is now regulation blue. There really doesn't seem to be much point arguing the toss over the American stipulations (Canadian models have the headlight wired in with the ignition); they exist and if you want to sell bikes over there you have to comply. I suppose it is just possible that a number of affluent Yanks will be saved a few premature grey hairs as they chop and change amongst their vast stables of latest model two wheelers, but over here it only adds to the cost. And after all, a century or so's motorcycle production is going to take quite a while to wind up on the mantlepiece or the junk pile.

So there you have it, open minded approach *et al.* I for one would gladly brave the horrors of Andover station for another ride on the Commando Mk 3, for a chance to really absorb the character of the machine, to appreciate it and to enjoy the very definite style of biking it offers. For that's a very important thing with the Norton — its character. It's something that tends to get sidelined with the majority of modern machines, but once you've ridden a bike like this you suddenly realise that you've been missing out.

The Commando complements the Trident surprisingly well. The three is sleek and fast, really fast, and in its latest guise a front line contender in the big bike world. The Commando provides the raw, brute force back-up of relentless low revving power, the kind of action suited to effortless day long cruising with the box set in top and a lazy right hand offering a little more or less throttle as the situation demands. At a glance it may not have changed very much, but in fact it has changed a great deal. It is very much a new machine, at long last fulfilling the potential that until now has remained so ridiculously unexploited. Above all else, the Mk 3 is definitely not just another Commando.

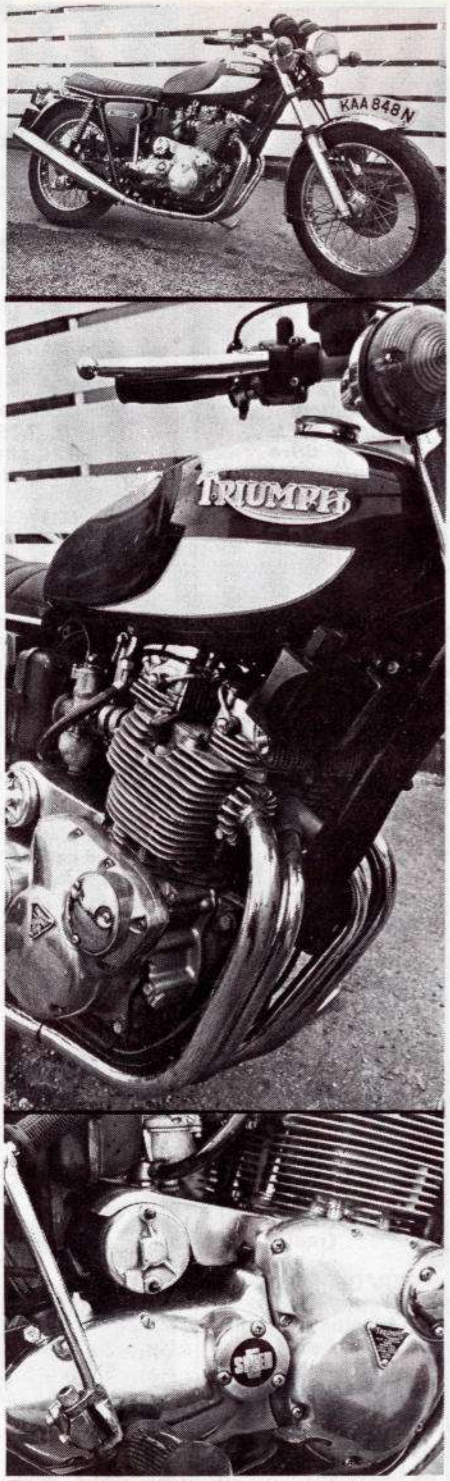
Phil Mather

triumph

T160V

SALISBURY Plain, stretched out bare and open to a heavy grey sky, is bisected by a thin ribbon of tarmac, one end of which unwinds in a blur under the front wheel while the other disappears over the edge of the drab, wintry countryside. Stonehenge's primeval silhouette looms out of the emptiness of the plain and then vanishes behind my right shoulder.

This visual tableau of stark, primitive forms is accompanied by a rumbling, growling noise that could almost be coming from the massive lungs of a Tyrannosaurus.



Top: *Trident looks rakish for '75; appearance is result of radical redesign in both engine/gearbox unit and chassis.*
Centre: Motor tilts forward 15 degrees to take electric starter and keep centre of gravity low.
Above: Gearbox internals remain the same except for crossover shaft behind 5 speed cover. Electric foot by Lucas.

Instead, it's bellowing from the three lusty cylinders of the new electric start Triumph Trident I've just collected from the nearby Andover factory.

Oddly, the elemental landscape seems quite in accord with the feeling of riding this, the latest, most complex machine to be launched on the market by the British motorcycle industry. Thankfully sophistication hasn't spoiled what has always been a good bike. It's polished blemishes away but left that raw edge that is the quintessence of British biking.

Roller-coastering over the gentle swells and dips of the road I just relax and take in the feeling of space and the exhilaration of riding one of those big, honest bikes that demands very little of you, but gives all you could want.

Still a distinctively British bike, the Trident represents a biking ethos that has been declining these past few years as the sadly shrunken state of the British industry testifies. With so many super-smooth studs dashing around on flash multis and screaming little two strokes, admitting to a partiality for the simple joys of British biking is likely to get you ostracised from trendy society. What the hell, I'm not going to start apologising for going into raptures about the Trident's charms. It's not a question of blind patriotism, it's just that I love that noise, the power and that hefty feel.

When the Triumph Trident was first sprung on the unsophisticated motorcycle market of the late sixties circumstances conspired to deny it the popularity it really deserved. A lot of bikers were ready for excitingly exotic machinery to break the monotony of the ubiquitous parallel twin, and the Trident should have taken the world by storm as the first of the seventies generation of so-called superbikes.

But just a few months later the inscrutable Orientals outbid Triumph in technological one-upmanship when they launched on a spell-bound public the 750 Honda with no less than *four* cylinders. Exotica from the mysterious East seemed far more appealing than any bike from the grimy Midlands, and a four was a breath-taking step into the realms of super-technology, or at least it was back in those naive days before we became blasé with a surfeit of threes, fours and sixes. Sadly, that left the Trident, and its BSA stablemate, the Rocket-3, in a state of limbo in a rapidly changing biking scene that must have left the British designers feeling deflated and befuddled.

So the Japanese onslaught took the wind right out of BSA-Triumph's sails (and sales), the Rocket-3 faded into history and the Trident underwent a few superficial and half-hearted styling changes which demonstrated that Triumph just weren't sure where they were going.

For a brief interlude it seemed they'd actually summoned up the resolve to launch something bravely new and different, in the shape of the Craig Vetter styled Triumph X-75 Hurricane (tested in the March/April '73 issue of *Bike*). But then it seemed as though the more conservative elements of the staid Meriden management got windy about it, and very few were produced before it went to an early grave like so many other good ideas.

The Trident just didn't have the style to cut it along with the rash or more exciting multis that sprang up from over the seas. Sure, it was a great bike to ride, but many potential buyers were seduced away by the glitter of chrome and electric starters. Anyway, with all the production problems the muddled British industry was facing, what was the point of them stimulating a demand they did not have the resources to satisfy?

But something had to change if the Trident wasn't going to fade away into obscurity. Thank God it's happened at last, and I just hope it's not too late to make up for the acres of ground lost in the first seven years of the Trident's life. If the Trident had been like this seven years ago there wouldn't be half as many Honda fours on the road now. At last it can stand up for itself among the ranks of the world's best and most exciting heavy road-burners, without looking inadequate or inferior.

For me, riding the Trident was something of a re-discovery of the joys of British biking, and a glad realisation that the sickly remnants of the country's industry is capable of presenting its products with the sort of style and finesse today's discerning market demands.

With three models representing the sum total of the NVT's range, including the Bonneville twin workers' co-op special, test bikes don't come our way very often, and we get to accept the values of Japanese designers as the norm, purely because we ride so many of their bikes. But the sight, sound and feel of the new Trident brought back the good feelings I had when I first rode one of the threes, the BSA version, back in 1970. An overall impression of solid, honest machinery hits you as soon as you punch the new starter button and the motor rumbles into life with a deep throated, purposeful thundering, almost like a big V8 diesel.

The Trident's sound, although somewhat emasculated by the new Norton type silencers to satisfy those insidious American vehicle regulations, is still as evocative as it always was. Anyone who has heard the soulful wail of a Trident on the race tracks will know what I mean.

We picked up the Trident from Kitts Green, home of the NVT development shop, and having ridden the Norton there from Peterborough, the differences between the twin and the triple felt all the more marked. Although both bikes' heritage stamps them with that distinctly British character, they each have a very individual feel.

Despite the frills and finery, the Commando's attraction is still that of the unsophisticated punchiness the parallel twin is known and loved (and hated by some) for. But the triple's appeal is more subtle. It lacks the Norton's hefty off-the-line torque, but makes up for it in a consistent surge of smooth, solid power that goes on churning out long after the twin runs out of steam. ▶

bike

Reprinted from *Bike* magazine,
May 1975

The Trident is, in fact, one of the fastest bikes we've ever put through our electronic speed trap. It recorded a staggering one-way best of 126 mph. I could hardly believe it when I went back to look at the speed on the clock after my first run through the trap. Admittedly there was a moderate tail wind, but minutes before in identical conditions, the Commando had only managed 111 mph. It surprised everyone at the factory too: we'd been told that the extra silencing, air filters, etc. had cut the power.

Perhaps it was an unusually good motor, but it went like a rocket and just kept on revving. At that recorded speed of 126, the motor was in fact a couple of hundred over the recommended safe max revs of 8,000. Either the company's claimed power output figure of 58 bhp at 7,250 rpm is rather conservative, or all the opposition are lying about *their* power output figures.

Standing quarter times would have been significantly faster I'm sure, but for a slipping clutch. Under normal road conditions the clutch gave no problems, but as soon as it was subjected to the brutal punishment of being dropped in while the motor screamed at 8,000 rpm it slipped. Being a car-type single dry plate unit, it survived this sort of treatment better than the normal multi-plate type would. Half a dozen runs failed to have any permanent effect on the clutch, as soon as it cooled down it was perfectly OK again under normal conditions. But the slip meant that instead of catapulting off the line, the Trident just eased away until the clutch began to bite, which wasn't until second gear was notched up. Then the bike just powered up the airfield strip like a Phantom jet fighter on red alert. Without the clutch problems, times in the low thirteens would have been no sweat. As it is, 13.77 secs still ain't bad by any standards.

The Trident's riding position feels immediately more functional than that provided by the Norton's high and wide US export bars. The Trident's flat, narrow bars and low seat give the sort of easy touring stance that British bikes used to have before they started pandering to the whims of easy-riding Yanks. It's comfortable and practical for long distance touring, or wriggling through metropolitan traffic.

Handling has a lot to do with the characteristic British feel. It's not as taut and responsive as some Italian machinery, but it gives a feeling of security and supreme confidence I've never experienced on any Japanese heavyweight. It sticks firmly to a predictable line, refusing to be deflected by bumps or rough road surfaces, and makes it easy to relax and enjoy the ride even when you're scratching around twisting country roads.

After the Norton motor's lazy pulsing, the Trident seemed hopelessly undergeared as I headed homewards from Kitts Green, until a glance at the tacho told me the three-pot mill wasn't spinning half as fast as I thought. In actual fact, I quickly discovered the Trident could lug just as well at low revs as the Commando. Perhaps not with

Continues on page 62

Checkout

	TRIUMPH TRIDENT T160	NORTON COMMANDO Mk. III
Engine	Three cyl. ohv 4-stroke	Twin cyl. ohv 4-stroke
Bore and Stroke	67 x 70 mm	77 x 89 mm
Capacity	740 cc	828 cc
Comp ratio	9.5:1	8.5:1
Carburettors	3 x 27 mm Amal	2 x 32 mm Amal
BHP @ RPM	58 @ 7,250	58 @ 5,900
Primary drive	Duplex chain	Triplex chain
Clutch	Single plate, dry	Multi-plate, wet
Gear ratios overall		
(1)	12.72:1	10.7:1
(2)	9.05:1	6.8:1
(3)	6.89:1	5.1:1
(4)	5.85:1	4.2:1
(5)	4.92:1	—
Electrical system	120w alternator battery/coil ignition	120w alternator battery/coil ignition
Lighting	45/40w headlight 6/21w tail/stoplight	45/40w headlight 6/21w tail/stoplight
DIMENSIONS		
Wheelbase	58 ins	57 ins
Seat height	30 ins	32 ins
Ground clearance	5.5 ins	4.0 ins
Handlebar height	40.0 ins	41.0 ins
Kerb weight	522 lbs (with 1 gall. fuel)	474 lbs (with 1 gall. fuel)
Oil capacity	6.0 pints	6.0 pints
Fuel capacity	4.8 galls	2.5 galls.
EQUIPMENT		
Trafficators	Yes	Yes
Electric Starter	Yes	Yes
Trip mileometer	Yes	Yes
Steering lock	Yes	Yes
Helmet lock	No	No
Headlight flasher	Yes	Yes
Kill button	Yes	Yes
Toolkit	Yes	Yes
Spare parts	No	No
Others	Mirrors	Mirrors, locking toolbox
CYCLE PARTS		
Tyres (front)	Dunlop TT 100 4.10 x 19	Avon GP 4.10 x 19
(rear)	Dunlop TT 100 4.10 x 19	Avon GP 4.10 x 19
Brakes (front)	10 in disc	10.7 in disc
(rear)	10 in disc	10.7 in disc
PERFORMANCE		
Top speed	126.05 mph	111.11 mph
Standing ¼ mile	13.77 secs	14.22 secs
0-30 mph	2.3 secs	2.4 secs
0-60 mph	5.1 secs	5.5 secs
Speedometer error:		
at indicated 30 mph	30.64 mph	26.71 mph
at indicated 60 mph	61.09 mph	56.60 mph
Fuel consumption		
(overall)	36.3 mpg	48.6 mpg
(ridden hard)	35.0 mpg	37.4 mpg
Braking distance		
(from 30 mph)	32 ft	30 ft
(from 60 mph)	136 ft	131 ft
PRICE	£1,215 inc VAT	£1,161 inc VAT
GUARANTEE	6 months/6,000 miles parts and labour	6 months/6,000 miles parts and labour
Supplied by	Norton Triumph Europe Ltd., North Way, Andover, Hants. SP10 5BL.	Norton Triumph Europe Ltd., North Way, Andover, Hants. SP10 5BL.

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Continued from page 60

quite such a crisp response, but smoother than the twin, which feels lumpy when you let the revs drop too low. It's surprising how the Triumph is content to bumble sedately along town streets in top gear, but to get things moving you've got to rapidly drop a couple of cogs.

So cruising homewards, the tarmac effortlessly and rapidly skimming under the wheels in a way that only happens when you form an affinity with a bike, I began to wonder about the changes that make this bike cost £300 more than its predecessor.

A price of £1215 is likely to horrify a lot of people who've got used to thinking of the products of their home industry as a cheap substitute for the costly brashness of a Honda or Kawasaki four. But in its '75 guise the Trident *is* in the same league as the Kawasaki, or Laverdas, or (goddamit why not?) the R75 Bee Em. There's always an element of the - grass - is - always - greener syndrome that makes British bikers denigrate British bikes, but even if the home market won't accept that the Trident is in the top league, I'm sure export markets will. The two biggest things that will bring about this acceptance are the electric starter and the superb new styling.

I'm sure one of the reasons for the Trident's lack of popularity in the past was the totally uninspiring appearance, a petrol tank with all the grace and sleekness of a housebrick, drab paint and a motor that sat primly and uncomfortably bolt upright in the frame. That beautiful hunk of motor should be flaunted, not apologised for. The NVT stylists have achieved that very effectively, merely by tilting the engine forwards 15 degrees (like the old Rocket-3), designing a tank that looks deceptively slim from the side, and using an extra bit of polish on the alloy casings.

There's an option of two tank sizes; three or four gallon; and two paint schemes, red with white or white with yellow. Our bike had the large tank that conceals an amazing four gallons, from the side it looks no bulkier than the three gallon option, but a squint from above reveals the extra width that conceals the additional gallon. The classic lines of the tank are set off by tasteful panels of contrasting paint and the good old traditional Triumph nameplate.

Silencers are NVT's annular discharge type, new to the Trident but the same as fitted to the Mk 2A Commando. The upward sweep of the silencers combines with the slope of the engine to give the new Trident an aggressive *elan* the old version never had. Detail changes in appearance although small, also make a great contribution to the Trident's smooth new look. Seat and sidepanels are redesigned, there's new, tidier switches and neat rubber mountings for the instruments incorporating a warning light console with, for the first time folks, a neutral indicator light.

Of course the changes go more'n skin deep. There's getting on for 50 major design mods, and quite a few more minor ones. Fitting a starter motor involved modifications to the crankcases, clutch and primary chain case. The starter is a car-type pre-engaged, solenoid operated Lucas unit which hides under a satin chromed cover-plate atop of the gearbox. The starter motor pinion meshes directly onto gear teeth on the back of the Trident's single dry plate clutch.

Some of the design changes are not necessarily improvements, merely standardisation forced upon NVT by the American legislators who have decreed that gear change pedals shall be on the left, and brake pedals on the right. Such is the power of the American Dollar, we get not necessarily what we want, but what some politician a few thousand miles across the Atlantic thinks the coddled American public needs. Other things they've foisted on us are standardised and labelled handlebar switches, including an engine kill button, and a neutral indicator light. Switching the gear-change to the left has been achieved without any detriment to the action of the gearbox, in fact NVT have taken the opportunity to make improvements to the camplate and shift lever movement, resulting in slick swapping that's just about as faultless as it can be. I never missed a gear once, and neutral snicks in soft and sure when you're at a standstill.

The crankcases had to be redesigned to accommodate the cross-shaft which achieves the change-over from right to left foot gear shift. It runs from the right hand side, just behind the plate with the 5 speed motif which covers the hole where the gear lever used to emerge, right through to the primary chaincase. Quadrant gears mesh with a gear on the lever shaft on the left extremity, and the other end is linked to the positive stop mechanism.

While making these changes, the development team also tilted the cylinders forward 15 degrees to make more room to accommodate the starter, and to get the weight lower and further forward. This meant redesigning the exhaust, with a cast manifold for the centre pot feeding two small diameter pipes. It looks neater than the old three - into - two system, it's more impressive with four pipes tucked close into the engine, and it also gives more power.

One of the rather exclusive features that boosts the new Trident's status is the hydraulically operated rear disc brake — something none of its presently available Japanese competitors can boast. The master cylinder is tucked away behind the brake pedal and the fluid reservoir is out of harm's way underneath the side hinging seat. It works well — too well if anything. The rear wheel can be easily locked on dry roads, if you don't have the dainty tread of a ballet dancer. If that ingenious Mullard anti-lock system being developed by the Transport and Road Research Laboratory had been incorporated it would really have given the Trident the lead in safety. Then with discs front and back the braking system could be coupled as our very own LJKS advocated in his *Cog-Swapping* column back in August '74.

In addition to the repositioning of the engine, the Trident has a new frame just like the production racer "Slippery Sam" — the most famous Trident of all which notched up three consecutive Production TT wins in '72, '73 and '74, and many other racing honours. The swinging arm is longer, and the front forks are shorter, all to get the weight lower and further forward. The new frame and upswept silencers give the T160V extra ground clearance. I never grounded anything, even though the confidence inspired by the Trident's virtuous handling persuaded me to antics that I'm sure upright citizens would deplore.

The electric starter and its associated gubbins, and other additions make up about 40lb extra weight over the T150V. It's always been a hefty bike — and now it weighs in at 522lb with a gallon in the fuel tank, or 540lb with the full four gallons aboard. Still lighter than a few Japanese bikes I can think of, but of course it does mean you have to take low speed turns slowly and deliberately. At anything much above walking pace the weight turns to your advantage by helping that confidence-boosting feel of solid, secure handling. Surprisingly though, side winds affect the bike more than they should do, inducing a slow weave which never turns into a wobble, but is annoying all the same.

I very much doubt this is due to any fundamental handling fault — it is quite likely a simple matter of tyre pressures, but with

850
COMMANDO
ELECTRIC START

Top: New design Smiths clocks, ignition switch and warning lights make compact unit on top yoke. Above: Norton motor has strengthened cases and bottom end. Gearbox is still separate unit but position is now fixed.

an insanely hectic test schedule, I never got time to experiment with different pressures.

While we're on the moans I've got to tell you that our test Trident laid itself open to all those old British bike jokes about oil leaks. It seeped from the point where the clutch cable enters the primary chain case, and while no great quantity of lubricant escaped it left an unsightly film of gunge over the left side panel. Triumph's chief development engineer Doug Hele was aware of this problem when I mentioned it to him, and he assured me that all bikes leaving the production lines now have a section of tube inserted in the chaincase to seal the oil out of the cable housing.

The Trident's thirst has always been notorious, and our average figure of just over 36 mpg shows things haven't changed. But considering it's one of the fastest 750s around (faster than the Kawasaki H2 which used to have a reputation for speed, and a heavier thirst) that ain't too much to live with. Seems they're working on the problem too with their prototype 850 Trident which Hele reckons could eventually be more economical than the present 750. That's got to be some machine too — ah well, we'll just have to wait.

But until that 850 version becomes a commercial reality, I've got a feeling the T160 is going to do a lot for the British industry's flagging reputation, here and abroad. Let's just hope it's going to be the answer to NVT's financial problems too.

Bill Haylock

Top: Test Norton had small tank, wide bars option. Choke lever mounts in traditional position. Above: Trident's hinged seat conceals oil tank filler and rear brake hydraulic reservoir. Toolkit sits in between.

Summary

LOOKING back on this, only the second all-British Giant Test in *Bike's* history, we can't help remembering that despite the usual frustrations of unbelievably tight time schedules, crummy weather, and a thousand and one other things clamouring for priority, those two machines really were good to ride. We used any and every excuse to take them down the road, sometimes pushing them to the limit, exploring every last ounce of potential; sometimes cruising free an' easy, relaxing in the feeling of unruffled confidence they convey. That's the first impression you get from riding the Norton and the Triumph, and the one that always seems to come to mind afterwards — they're so manageable. It's so damn easy to jump aboard and go places without having to worry about a peculiar handling or a particular power characteristic: you just get on and go.

Since its initial success back in '67 the Commando has lost a lot of ground in the battle of the giants, but the latest specs plus the extensive revision of known weak points slam it right back into the heat of the competition. With a rather dramatic price rise — over £200 up on the previous model — it's certainly no longer a cheap alternative machine, although it still undercuts the all powerful Kawasaki Z1 *and* Norton Triumph are confident they can hold the price.

The final outcome of the Commando story remains to be seen. So many factors way beyond the limited scope of motorcycling will influence its future, yet while national economies tremble, bikers at least will have difficulty finding a more satisfying way of losing their troubles.

Meanwhile, the Trident now has sophistication, frills and finery the British purists will probably abhor — but it is still a fit machine to carry into the seventies (and eighties maybe) the tradition that produced such British classics as Brough Superior, Manx Norton and, of course, the Triumph Speed Twin.

It costs fifty quid above the Commando's list price, and £250 more than the T150, but it also offers more refinement and a hell of a lot more style than either the old Trident or the new Commando. And it has as much to offer as many machines in the swelling ranks of luxury bikes costing as much as a couple of grand.

Of the two bikes the Trident must have the brighter future. The Norton twin inevitably looks dated, however well it performs, but the triple powerhouse is, with the benefit of its new styling, one of the most exciting looking engines around. And the way it performs compared to most of its opposition shows the design still has plenty of youthful virility. What's more the Trident still costs roughly the same as a British Leyland Mini (yeeuch — excuse me while I vomit). I know which I'd sooner spend 1200 notes on. ●

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JUNE

Avon Roadrunner

With the summertime arrival of Avon's new low-profile Roadrunner tyre, there was suddenly a rival to Dunlop's famous TT100

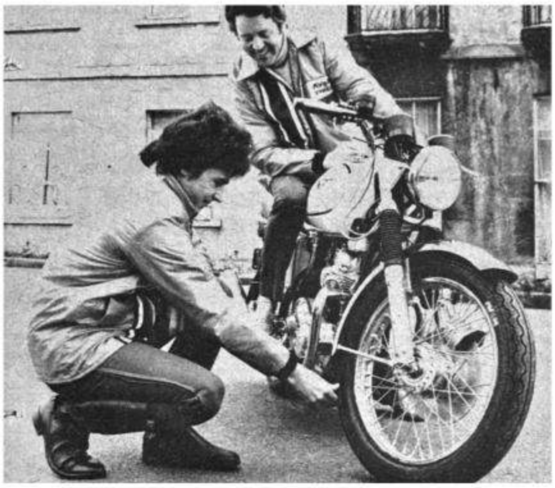
Road tyre technology barely moved on from the 1950s to the late '60s, but in fairness bike technology hadn't moved on by much either. It wasn't until the arrival of the Triumph Trident and Honda CB750 that a new generation of tyres was required, in wider sizes and with lower profiles, to cope with the increased power, performance and weight of the coming superbikes.

Dunlop introduced their Roadmaster K81 rear tyre in 1968 and it was rebranded as the TT100 after Malcolm Uphill's 100.37mph lap aboard a 650cc Triumph Bonneville as he won the 1969 Production TT. Avon were Dunlop's traditional rival for UK tyre sales, but they didn't respond to the TT100 until the summer of 1975, when they launched the Roadrunner in direct competition with Dunlop's market leader.

Roadrunners or TT100s became the essential tyre choice in the late 1970s. At this time the tyres used by Japanese manufacturers as original fitment were regarded with suspicion, especially for their wet-weather performance, so some buyers would have their preferred British-made tyres fitted before a new bike left the dealer. However, most waited until their Bridgestone, Yokohama or Japanese-made Dunlops had worn out... hoping that they wouldn't put their bike into a ditch in the meantime.

Because most owners used their bikes as regular transport, tyre life was an issue too. Although the TT100 might have had superior ultimate performance, the Roadrunner lasted longer – an important consideration in cash-strapped 1970s Britain. The chances are that the '70s project bike you drag from a barn will be fitted with Roadrunners. CB

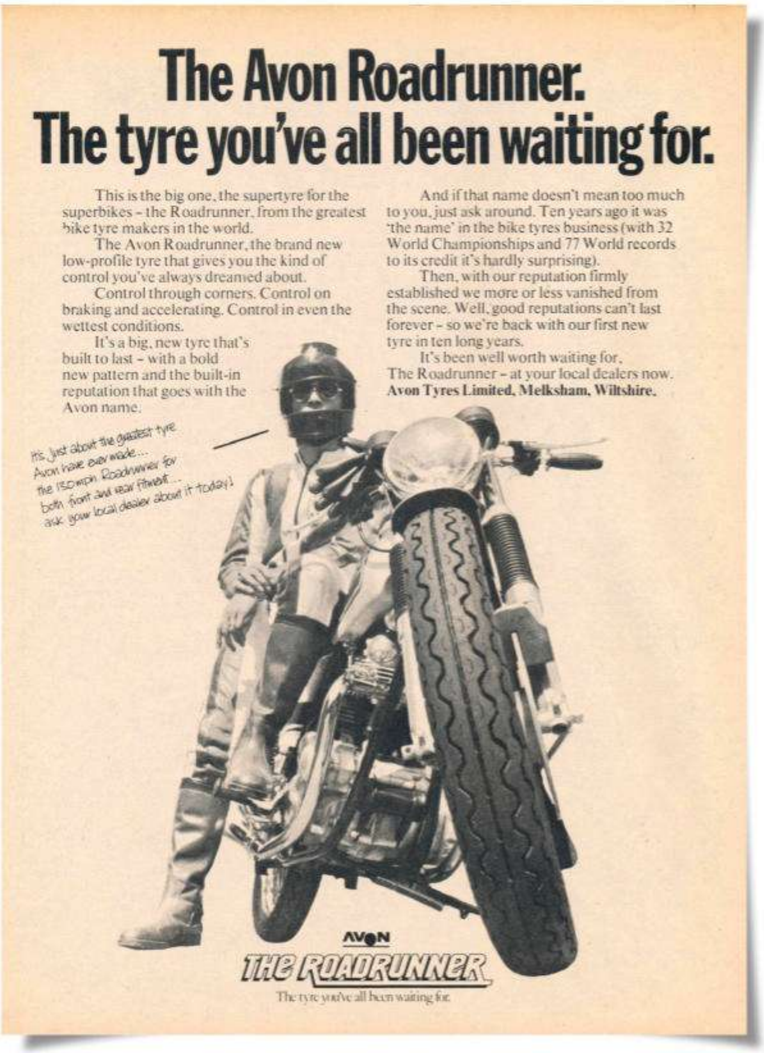
'Japanese tyres were regarded with suspicion'



AVON TYRES LIMITED

LEFT Geoff Duke with his son Peter and Roadrunner-equipped Norton Commando at the tyre's launch

AVON TYRES LIMITED



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John Louis, an early adopter of the Weslake four-valve engine, won the '75 British Speedway Final at Coventry

TREVOR MEEKS

JULY

The moment of truth

At the British Speedway Final on July 30, the new **Weslake** speedway engine swept its riders to first, second, fourth and fifth places. Peter Collins was second on the night, but went on to win Weslake's first Speedway World Championship the following year

Words **HUGO WILSON**

In the mid-1970s, as the established British motorcycle industry lurched from one crisis to the next, there were still flickers of hope in UK based manufacturing and development. The Weslake speedway engine was one of them.

Weslake were a well established research and development engineers with a particular specialism in gas flow and four-valve cylinder heads. Company founder Harry Weslake had biking history going back years. During World War I, while still in his teens, he'd taken out carburettor patents. In the 1920s he prepared Sunbeam motorcycles for racing at Brooklands and developed a gas flow meter to test cylinder head efficiency. He went on to work with Bentley, Jaguar, Vanwall and other British motor industry giants. In the 1960s, among other projects, he developed the

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

BELOW Peter Collins was a latecomer to using Weslake power, but got the drift and became world champ using one

V12 engine for Dan Gurney's Eagle Formula One car and made four-valve conversions for Triumph parallel twins.

The speedway engine wasn't a commission. It was a response to the idea that the firm could build a four-valve engine that'd outperform the dominant two-valve Jawa, and which might be a commercial success.

Work had begun in 1974 and the prototype engine first ran at that October's International Grass Track meeting at Lydden Hill in Kent, having been hastily assembled the day before. Ridden by Don Godden, who was involved in the bike's development, the bike performed well in the final, but was thwarted by a lack of sparks. Peter Collins won on a Jawa, but he'd definitely noted the Weslake's performance.

In December, with the engine now in a speedway frame, it was tested at Hackney Speedway track by Ipswich captain John Louis. He was impressed enough to order two units for the start of the speedway season in the following March.

The new engine used a flat-top piston and a narrow valve angle, with a pent-roof cylinder head. The four valves were opened by pushrods and the rocker layout was apparently informed by the work that had been done on Weslake's four-valve conversion for the Triumph twin. It would safely rev to 8500rpm, with peak power (of around 45bhp) at 6500rpm. The new engine was designed with the same engine mounting positions as a Jawa unit, so it could be fitted straight into an existing frame.

Despite having seen the prototype engine in action at Lydden Hill the previous year, Peter Collins – then one of the world's top riders – wasn't among the very early adopters.

"Dave Nourish was the northern distributor for Weslake. He took me down to the factory in spring 1975 and showed me what they were doing," says Peter. "I hadn't ridden one at that time. Then Dave brought an engine up for me to test at Belle Vue. I was

GEORGE E GREGORY

‘It was a big leap forward in terms of speed and pulling power’

GEORGE E GREGORY

Scenes from the Weslake factory, from left to right: the machine shop, sub assembly and engine building areas. Work had begun on the new engine in 1974, with the firm’s experience in making four-cylinder conversions for Triumph parallel twins coming in handy

GEORGE E GREGORY

MICHAEL PATRICK

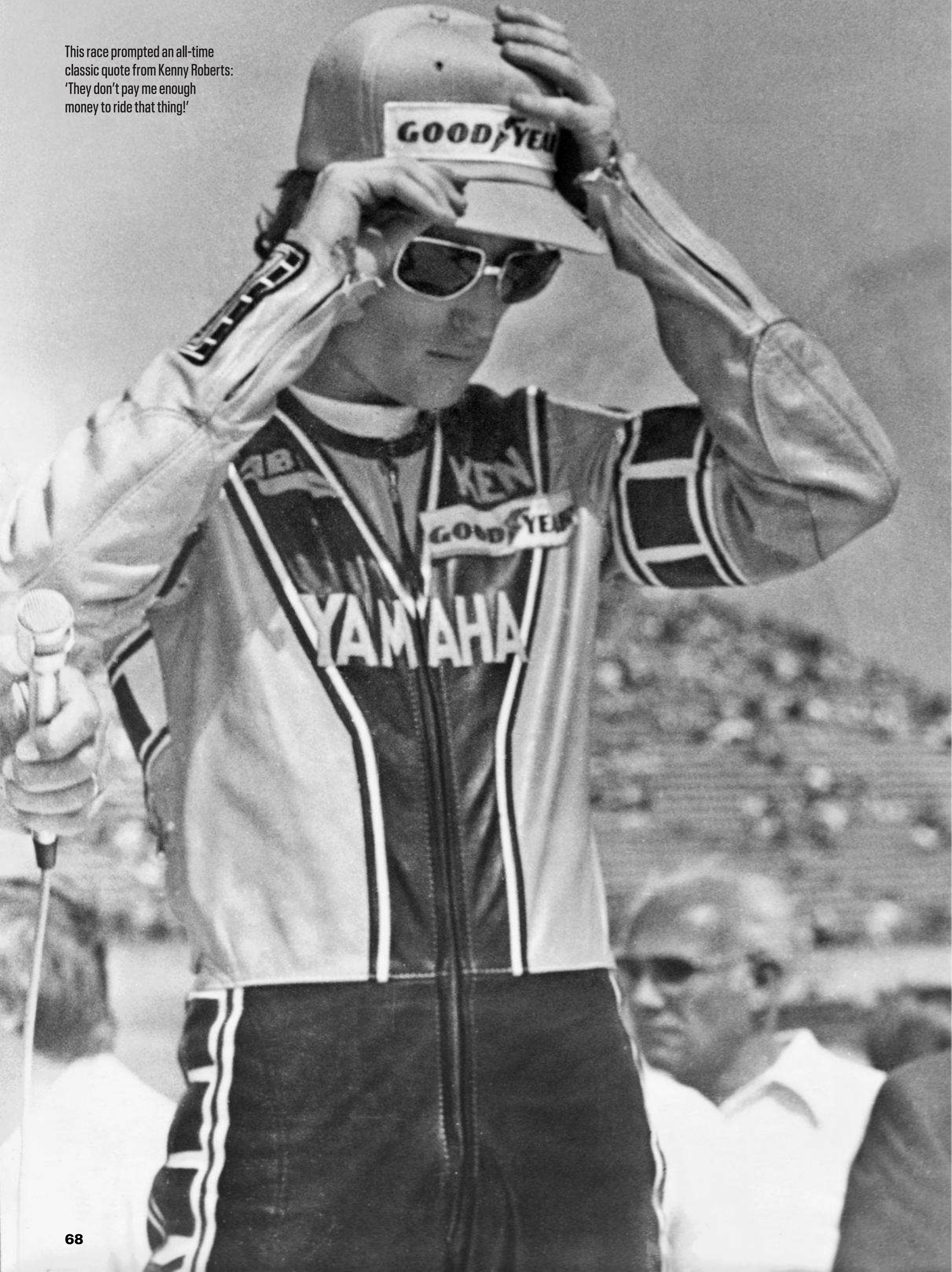
David Short, Brian Lovell of Weslake with Don Godden and John Louis testing the Weslake

impressed, but at the time I had the best two-valve Jawas prepared by Guy Hallet, so I wasn’t in a great rush to change. In truth, I was a bit slow.

“John Louis, Ray Wilson at Leicester and Martin Ashby at Swindon had been riding with them all season. And Phil Crump was riding a Jawa with a four-valve conversion. It was three months into the season before I raced the Weslake at the Golden Helmet competition. Phil Crump beat me, but I realised its potential as soon as I started using it. I knew that four valves were definitely the future. It was a big leap forward in terms of speed at the end of the straight and the pulling power out of corners was far superior.’

By the time of the British Final at Coventry in July, the Weslake was gaining real popularity among top riders. John Louis won on the night, ahead of Peter Collins, Malcolm Simmonds and Ray Wilson. Only Simmonds was riding a Jawa. By the end of the season, the majority of Britain’s top league riders were Weslake powered – and the success continued through the rest of the decade.

“I won the world championship in ’76 in Poland on a Weslake,” says Peter. “So I was the first world champion using a Weslake – and I stuck with them till nearly the end of my career. I was doing long-track and speedway, and the factory supplied me with about six or eight engines every year. The Weslake accelerated my career and helped me onto the very top rung of the ladder.’ CB


GOODYEAR
KEN
GOODYEAR
YAMAHA

This race prompted an all-time classic quote from Kenny Roberts: 'They don't pay me enough money to ride that thing!'

75

AUGUST

‘I’m just glad I lived to tell the story’

In August 1975 **Kenny Roberts** rode this TZ750-powered dirt-tracker in arguably the greatest race of all time round a mile oval. Here’s how he described it to Patrick Bodden

Even today, people walk up to me and say: ‘I was at that race’ or ‘I was at that mile’. They don’t have to explain what they mean. I know exactly what they’re talking about – the 1975 Indianapolis Mile, the night I first raced the Yamaha TZ750-powered dirt tracker.

To be honest, I wasn’t exactly enthused about building the thing, this overpowered dirt track miler powered by the four-cylinder two-stroke engine from Yamaha’s brutally fast 180mph TZ750 road racer. I really wanted to retain the AMA number one plate, and with only a handful of mile races on the AMA schedule, I felt we should build a proper dirt track racer, which meant building it around an engine designed for the job.

As for modifications to the big two-stroke to try to get that rear tyre to hook up in the turns – well, there weren’t any. I did have Kel [Carruthers, who built the bike] fit a kill switch directly on the grip that would cut the ignition to the number three cylinder. I’d press it going into the turns and then let it off when I felt the time was right. Trouble was, there’d then be an instantaneous 30 extra horsepower delivered to the rear wheel. The thing just wanted to spin the rear tyre and go sideways. When it did hook up, it was fast – 145, 150mph down the straights, a good 25mph faster than the Harleys.

MOTORCYCLE WEEKLY

Kenny on the TZ: ‘It just wanted to spin the rear tyre and go sideways’

The heat and semi races were exciting. When I managed to pass other riders going into a turn, they’d often get past me coming out, and I had to ride like a madman down the straight to pass them back and put enough distance on them so that they couldn’t pass me again in the next turn. Basically, the TZ and I clawed our way to a fourth in the heat race and a second in the semi, and we just barely transferred to the main. Had I not figured out during the semi that I needed to shift into fifth – instead of using the TZ’s big spread of power to ride the entire track in fourth – I would never have made the main.

The big fun was about to begin. I’d be starting from the last row, and I still hadn’t figured out how to get the thing around the track quickly.

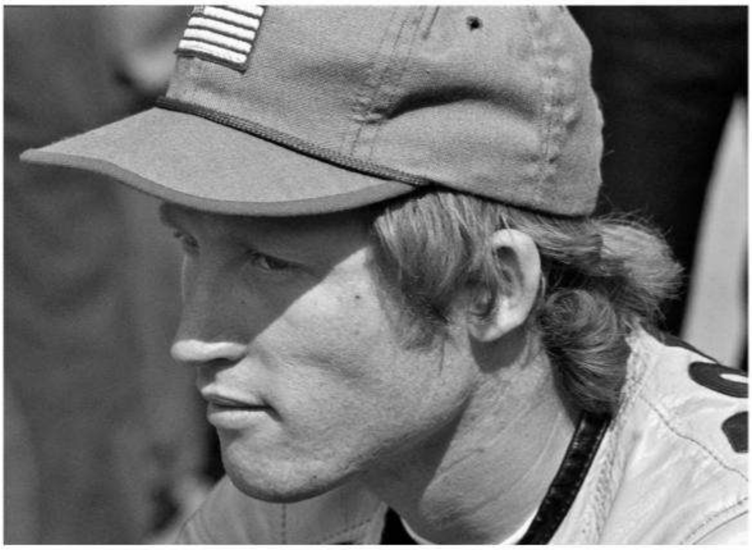
When the flag dropped for the main, the thing sat there spinning the rear tyre. I was dead last off the line. When I finally got the bike launched, I passed about 10 riders when I hit the straight for the first time. The next five laps were nothing but a blur. Even at the time I wouldn't have been able to say exactly what I was doing. I was just riding on pure instinct.

As the field spread out and things got a bit less crazy, I experimented with different techniques. For the next 15 laps I worked at finding a way to get the TZ to hook up. How fast in, how fast out; precisely where to position myself just before the apex; use the kill switch; don't use the kill switch; throttle position in each case. There were a lot of variables to getting it just right, and it required a lot more precision than you'd think. The tyres were chunking the whole time, so there had to be a conservative/aggressive approach, knowing which path to take under which circumstance.

No matter what, there was no way I could run in the same groove with the Harleys. So I went with this: 'Different bike, different track'. So, lap after lap, I created my own track, building my own groove, pushing the dirt – the berm – farther and farther out, making it bigger and wider and more solid so I could get a decent drive off it. By then, I was way out there, far from the rest of the racing. When I say far, I mean *far* – all the way to the very edge of the track, right up against the fence and hay bales. I was clipping the bales so hard that the bike came in from the race with straw wedged in it and baling wire embedded in the exhaust pipes! Looking back, it was not the smartest thing I ever did. If I had ever seen my sons Kenny Jnr or Kurtis doing such a thing, I'd have tried to get the race stopped – or I'd have just left, so I wouldn't have to watch something so crazy and dangerous.

Anyway, running my own race on my own track was paying off, and I finally settled into a pattern. But I had to hit every point on the track within 12 inches to keep the bike in the groove, turning the fastest possible lap times. Lap after lap, I was passing rider after rider and moving forward.

Eventually, I came up on Gary Scott and Mert Lawwill, who were battling for third entering a turn. Keep in mind I was closing on them entering each turn with an extra 25-30mph due to the TZ's massive power. Lawwill decides he can take Scott on the outside, and swings out to pass him. Holy shit! I can't pass Scott on the inside because he's right on the guardrail. I can't pass Lawwill on the outside because – well, because I just can't turn the thing. But Lawwill swings just wide enough that I make the pass between him and Scott, completely sideways with no room to spare. I really had no choice in the matter; it was a split-second guess that turned out to be correct.



'Pitching it into a turn at 150mph – you're not going to stop; these things don't have any brakes, really'

DON MAHONEY (MAHONY PHOTO ARCHIVE)

BELOW Roberts clawed his way through the heats and had to start the final from the last row, but he was determined to keep his cherished AMA No 1 plate

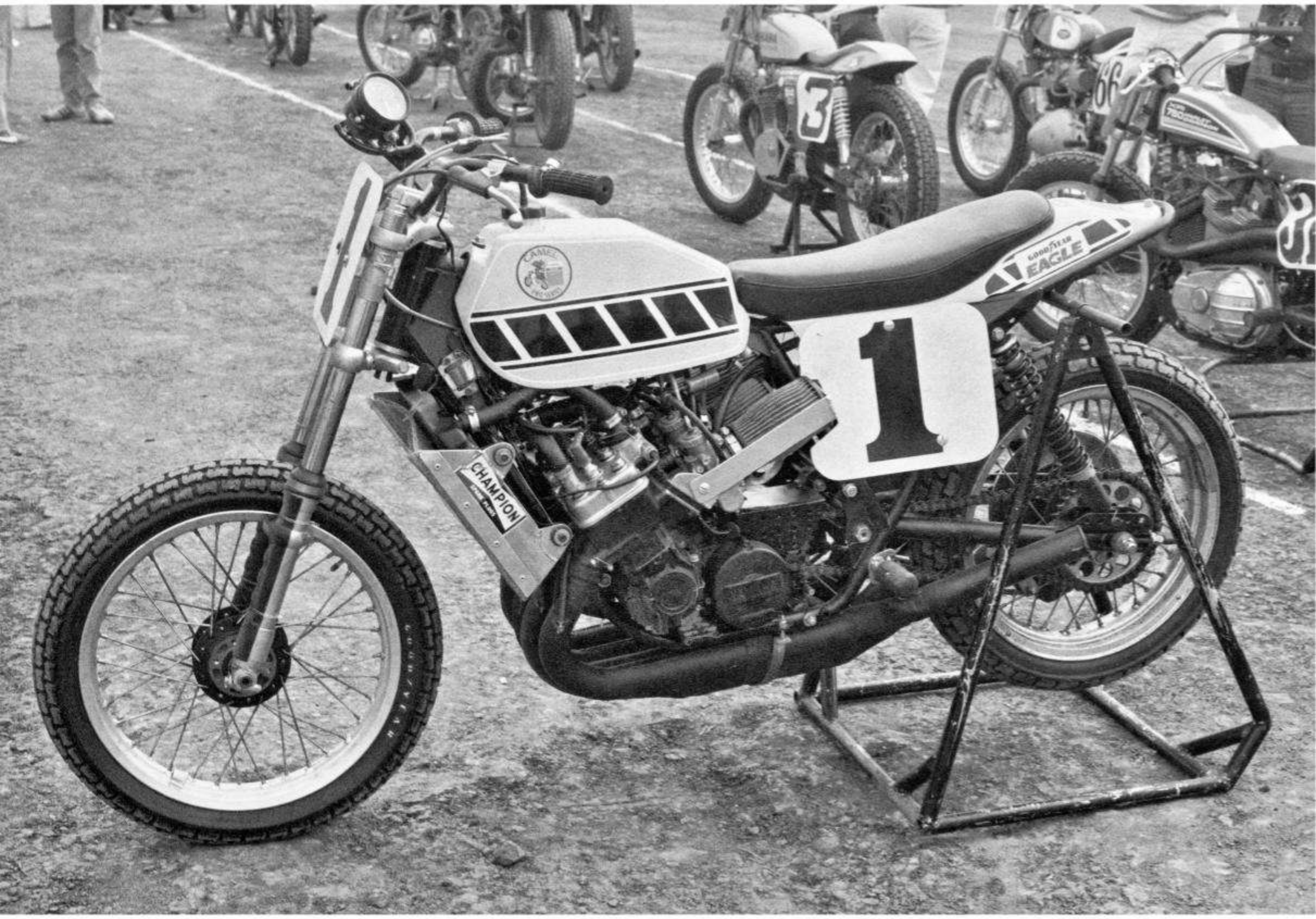
Pitching it into a turn at 150mph – you're not going to stop; these things don't have any brakes, really. You're not going to turn, as it's already sliding sideways to scrub off speed. If someone moves into your path, that's it. You're just gonna hit him at full speed. I was lucky I was able to fit between Lawwill and Scott when I blew by them.

So for a while it was just me with my own line at the edge of the track. Had I misjudged, jumped the berm and hit the bales, I'd have cleared the concrete wall on the other side and been pitched into the fence for catching sprint cars. It'd be like going through a cheese grater. The whole thing was a surefire recipe for disaster. So far I'd avoided that – by inches in some cases.

Five laps from the end I could finally see the leaders, Jay Springsteen and Corky Keener, with Keener having the edge on top speed. I started to think I hadn't been riding my ass off and risking life and limb for nothing, and that it looked like I was going to get third. I wasn't sure I could do any better than that. But it wasn't over yet.

Springsteen and Keener were so involved in racing each other that they hadn't noticed I was catching

D. RANDY RIGGS



ABOVE Roberts' Yamaha dirt track miler was powered by the fearsomely fast four-cylinder two-stroke engine from the factory's TZ750 road racer

them. About three laps from the end, Springsteen looked back as I was closing in. I'm sure he must have looked back several times during the race and seen no one. This time was different. There I was, and coming up fast. Springsteen decided he'd better signal Keener, so he pointed rearward with his thumb, then held up his finger to indicate number one, which was me.

But Keener got it wrong. He assumed Springer was indicating to him that no one was behind them and that he – Springer – was going to win the race. The two of them continued racing as they had been, Keener thinking he could relax a bit. Bad idea.

Going into the final turn I closed right up on them. I don't know what happened, exactly. I shifted up into fifth and that thing got a drive like it'd never gotten during the race. It was like God himself decided the TZ was going to get some serious traction coming off that turn. I was doing my part, straining every muscle as hard as I could to get the bike to hook up. When I nailed the throttle, the bike didn't go sideways – it accelerated so hard and straight that, for an instant, I thought I might hit Springsteen. But I didn't. I just blasted past him, thinking: 'Great! I'm gonna get second'. But I didn't stop there.

The next thing Keener saw was my yellow-and-black fuel tank, and he saw it too late. I mowed him down with that TZ miler and beat him to the finish line by inches.

The place went nuts, totally insane. I've never seen anything like it. Ever. It was complete chaos. The whole crowd was on its feet, everybody yelling and screaming and jumping up and down. Even people who weren't there remember that race – along with the comment I made afterward: "They don't pay me enough money to ride that thing!" People remember that.

It was spectacular, for sure. But it was just too crazy... really, really dangerous. Even the AMA understood that. They knew that with more development, the TZ750 dirt trackers would become missiles, and quickly. And they understood that, even if the TZs managed not to kill anybody in the process, they'd surely kill Harley-Davidson on the dirt tracks. The next year they were banned. You could say it was over before it ever got started.

Fine by me. Riding that TZ750 miler was a helluva experience, and I will always remember the race at Indy in 1975 as my most significant accomplishment on a dirt tracker. I'm just glad I lived to tell the story. CB

Thanks to Patrick Bodden for this interview. If you're reading this Patrick, please contact john@classicbike.uk

SEPTEMBER

Rocket takes off

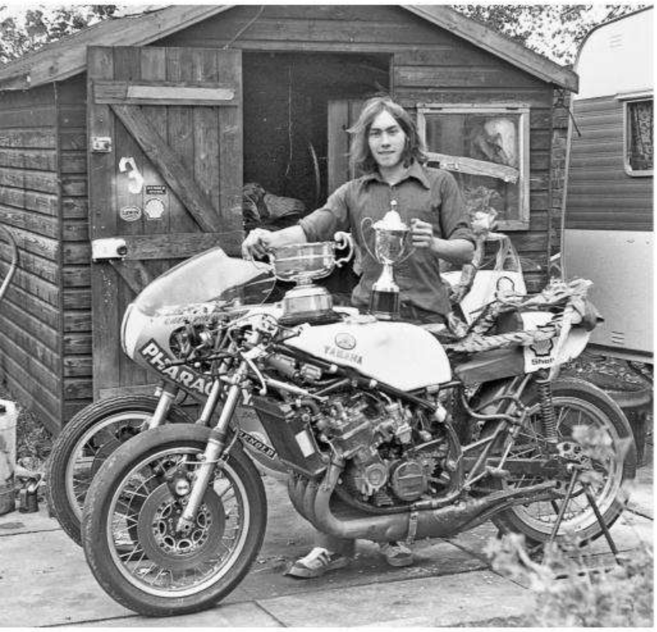
A 19-year-old **Ron Haslam** proves he can beat the world's best

Words **JOHN WESTLAKE**

MARTYN GODDARD, MICK WOOLETT & CADWELL PARK ARCHIVE

There were hints that Ron Haslam would do something extraordinary at Cadwell's International meeting in September 1975. He'd won dozens of club races that year, and on the day before the International he was leading Roger Marshall at a national race at Croft by a country mile. But the 19-year-old was impetuous – he crashed trying to break the lap record.

"I fell off on the last lap," he recalls. "It was the first time Malc [Malcolm Carter, Ron's terrifying manager] gave me a bollocking. I was feeling very guilty that I'd done that, so when I went to Cadwell I wanted to redeem myself."


A teenaged Haslam in 1975, silverware collection growing at a rate

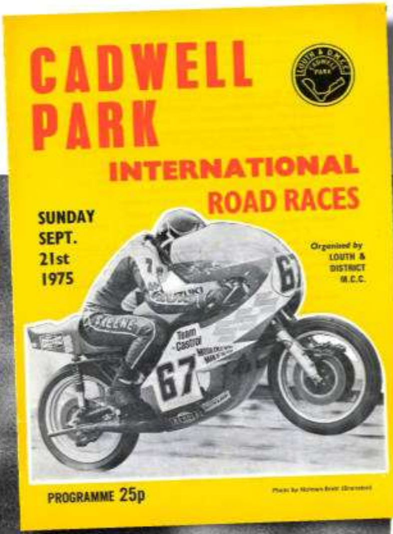
Redemption wasn't guaranteed though, because the race was a step up. He was up against Phil Read, then a two-time world champion and riding a works MV, and Mick Grant on the factory Kawasaki, plus Roger Marshall, John Newbold, Stan Woods and a host of other top riders.

Ron was third away on his TZ750 and was feeling confident. The wildly powerful TZ suited his balls-out riding style and he started reeling in Read and Grant. By the end of Park straight, he was with them – and once he got past, he just pulled away. After the Croft experience, there were no ill-judged lap record attempts and he won easily.

If that wasn't enough to convince the sceptics that Ron was a world-class rider, the next race sealed the deal. Once again, Read and Grant led from the start, with Ron in third trying to catch them – but this time, he misjudged his attack and arrived far, far too fast at the end of the Park straight...

"They were fighting side by side and I knew I was going to take them out," he says. "But then, while they were fighting, they separated and there was a hole." Ron shot through the gap completely out of control and took the lead. He threw the TZ into Park corner and somehow got round. "I looked behind me and saw Read and Grant shaking their heads."

Understandably, the two greats decided to leave Ron to it after that and he won comfortably. "That day at Cadwell was when I started to believe," he later told *Classic Bike*. "After that, I knew I could beat anybody." As he soon went on to prove. CB



CADWELL PARK

INTERNATIONAL ROAD RACES

SUNDAY
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1975

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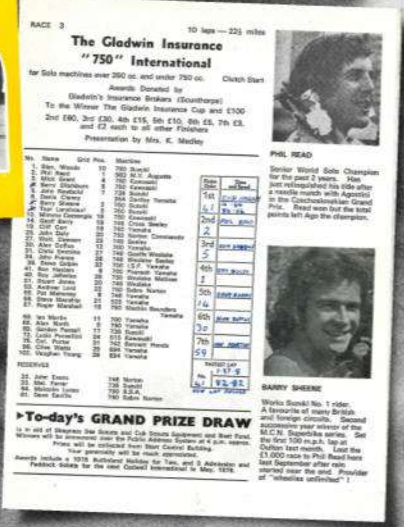
PROGRAMME 25p

Ron won the Gladwin Insurance 750 International and the Senior International, with Read second in both



RACE 3

10 laps — 22½ miles

The Gladwin Insurance
"750" International

for Solo machines over 350 cc. and under 750 cc. Clutch Start

Awards Donated by
Gladwin's Insurance Brokers (Scunthorpe)
To the Winner The Gladwin Insurance Cup and £100
2nd £60, 3rd £30, 4th £15, 5th £10, 6th £5, 7th £3, and £2 each to all other Finishers
Presentation by Mrs. K. Medley

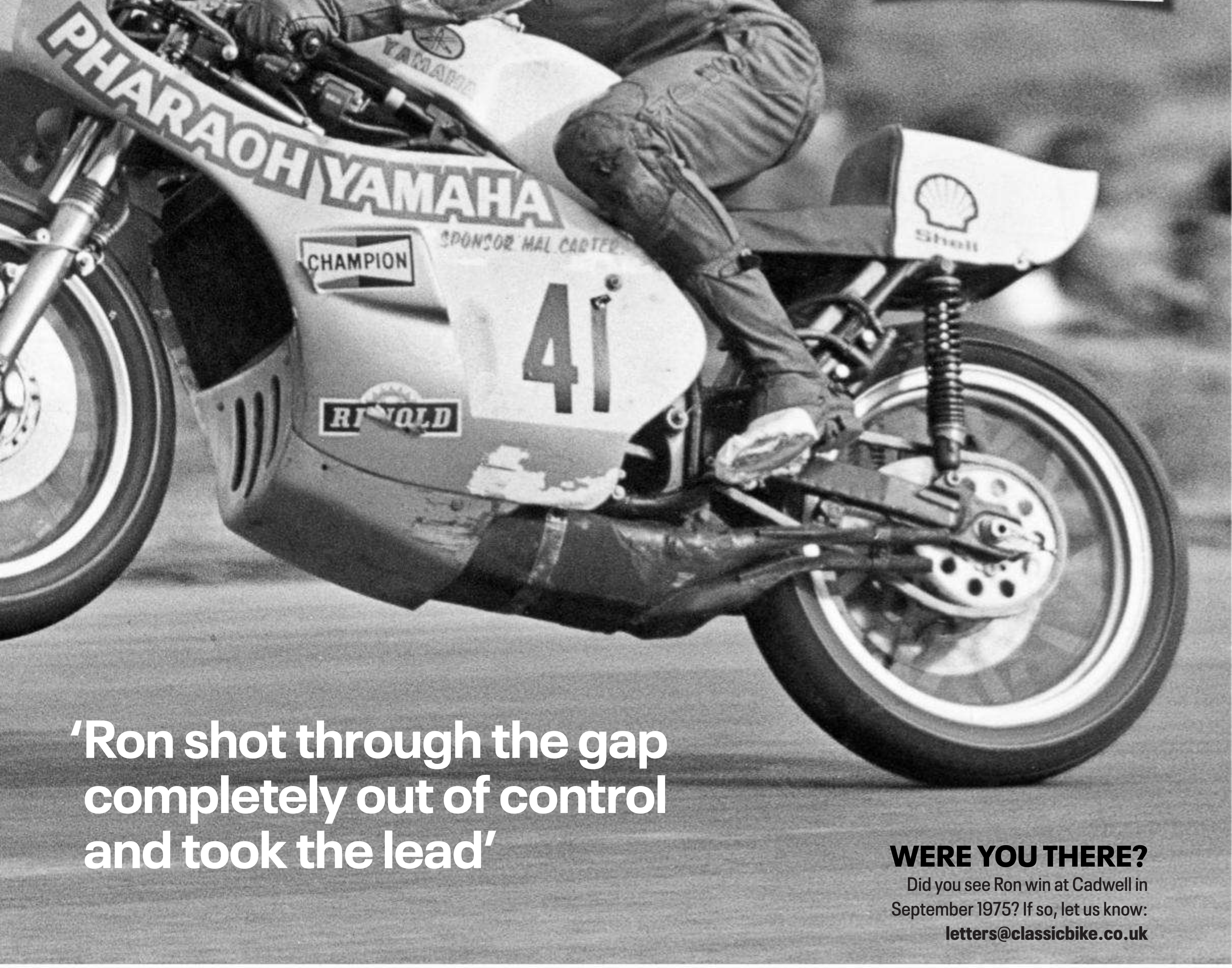
▸To-day's GRAND PRIZE DRAW

PHIL READ

Senior World Solo Champion for the past 2 years. Has just relinquished his title after a needle match with Agostini in the Czechoslovakian Grand Prix. Read won but the total points left Ago the champion.

BARRY SHEENE

Works Suzuki No. 1 rider. A favourite of many British and foreign circuits. Second successive year winner of the M.C.N. Superbike series. Set the first 100 m.p.h. lap at Oulton last month. Lost the £1,000 race to Phil Read here last September after rain started near the end. Provider of "wheelies unlimited" !



> 'Ron shot through the gap completely out of control and took the lead'

WERE YOU THERE?

Did you see Ron win at Cadwell in September 1975? If so, let us know: **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

75

OCTOBER

Yorkshire's world champion

The first ever World Trials Championship was a close-run thing all season – but on October 12, **Martin Lampkin** took the title by a whisker

The '70s were a period of change for trials. One of the biggest changes was the introduction of world championship status for the sport in 1975. Before that, the European championship had been dominated by British riders. Prior to the first world title event, there had just two non-British riders in the top three of the European series. But by 1975, another big change was looming.

As the inaugural world championship event got underway, there was a serious challenge to the dominance of British trials stars. That threat came in the shape of two Scandinavian riders – Sweden's Ulf Karlsson and the Finn, Yrjo Vesterinen. Karlsson had announced his credentials in the 1974 European series, finishing second for Montesa behind Malcolm Rathmell's Bultaco. The following year, it would be Vesterinen who posed the biggest threat to the Brits in what turned out to be one of the closest title races ever.

With 14 rounds – including events in Canada and the USA – it would be a long season for the elite of the trials world. With only a rider's best eight results to count for the title in 1975, any one of three men could have won going into the last round.

Tellingly, Bultaco boss Oriel Bulto issued no team orders to his two star riders on the last day. Both Lampkin and Vesterinen were in contention for the overall win after 13 rounds – but so too was Malcolm Rathmell, now Montesa-mounted. It was the recipe for a high-stakes, high-pressure day in Ricarny, Czechslovakia, in front of 15,000 spectators.

In the end, none of the leading trio in the title race could match Derbyshire ace Mick Andrews on his works Yamaha. "Vesty was riding well to start with," Mick recalls. "But I managed to get ahead of him after a couple of laps and stayed there." Behind Mick, Rathmell and Lampkin slugged it out between themselves after Vesterinen slipped back into fourth place. And it would take a count-back on most cleans to split the Yorkshire duo, with Lampkin getting the nod to claim second place behind Andrews on the day, thereby clinching the world crown by just one mark over a disappointed Vesterinen.

"It was fantastic to be a part of it," says Mick Andrews. We were all mates and whoever won on the day, won. I think we all probably had a beer or two after the result was announced."

ABOVE Martin Lampkin with trusty Bultaco, competing in Britain in 1975

RIGHT The Lampkin clan, left to right: Arthur, Alan, Martin, Violet and Arthur Snr, photographed in Silsden in 1975

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

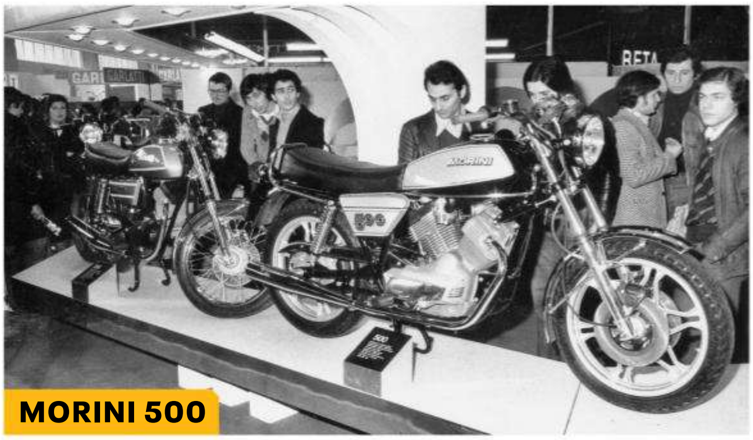
> ‘With 14 rounds, it would be a long season for the elite of the trials world’

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

NOVEMBER

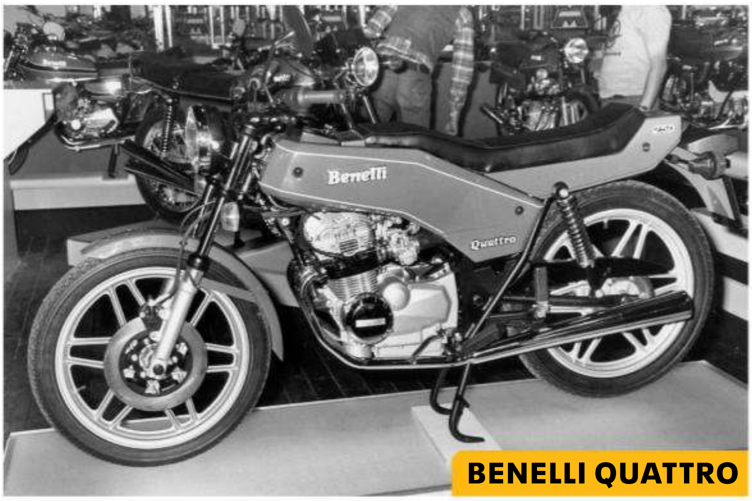
It’s show time

The Milan Motorcycle Show suggested that 1976 would be a good year too, with new models from Italian factories

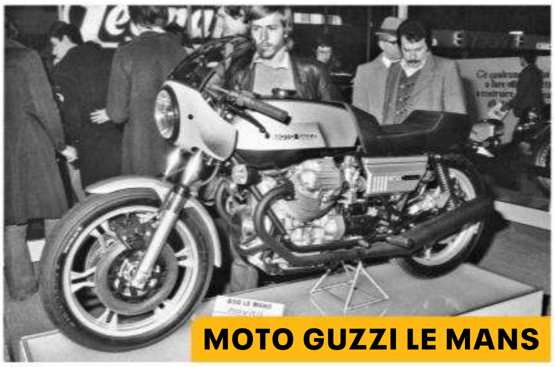

PHOTOGRAPHY: BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

MORINI 500

Prototype 500 Morini drew the crowds in Milan. The production versions would have different wheels, bodywork and paint scheme, and they didn’t arrive in the UK until 1978.


BENELLI QUATTRO

Benelli’s cute 250 four had instruments in the fuel tank and futuristic styling that featured a seat running onto the tank. The engine was a Honda-inspired unit, but few made it to the UK.


MOTO GUZZI LE MANS

Moto Guzzi’s Le Mans became a global best seller for the long established marque. The shaft-driven V-twin made a surprisingly good sports bike.

DECEMBER

MOTOR CYCLE NEWS, December 24, 1975

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

Staff at Small Heath give the 'last Triumph Trident' off the line at the Birmingham factory a send-off

Trident teeters along

Triples in trouble as Small Heath factory stops making bikes

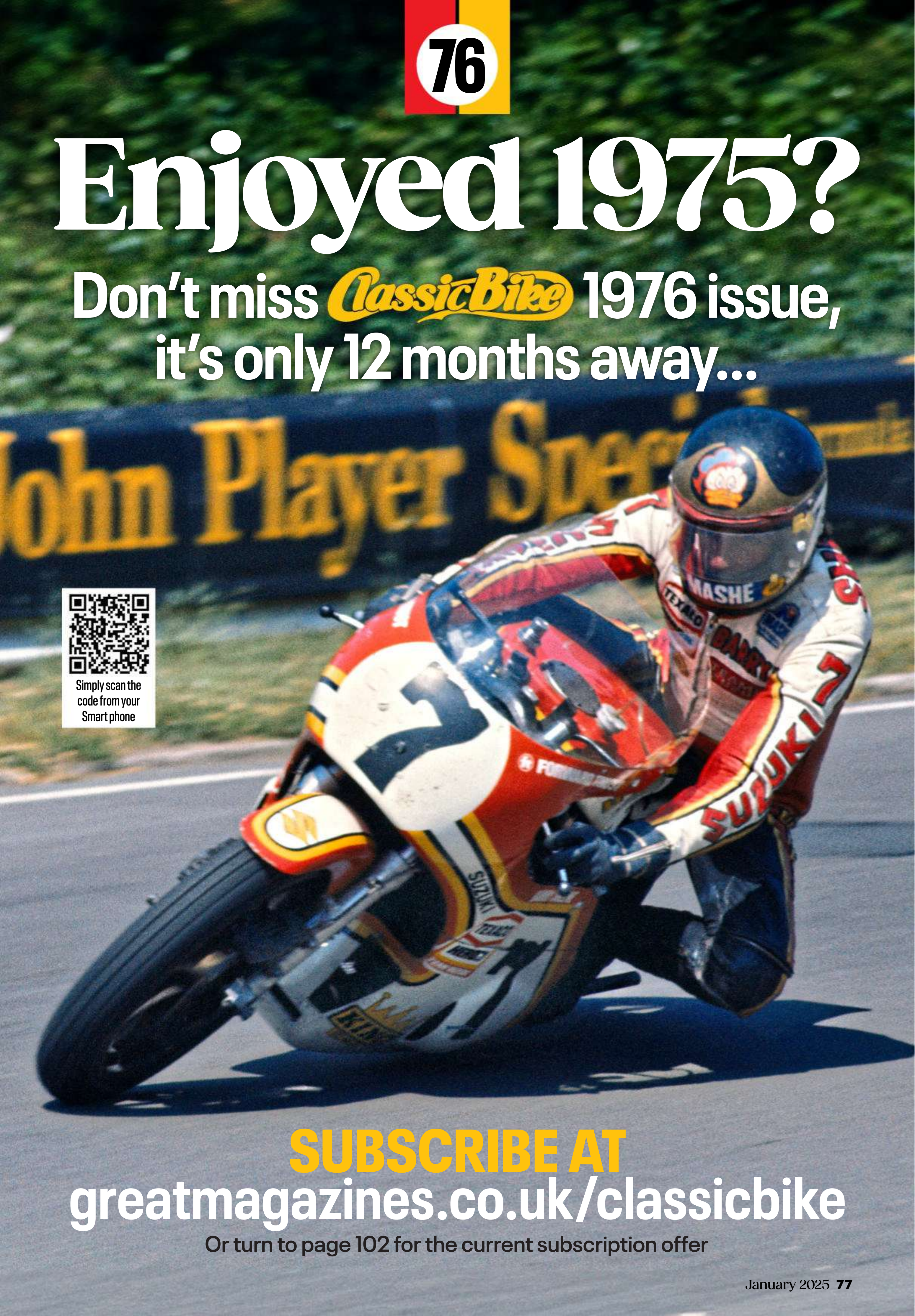
Just before Christmas 1975, it was announced that the last Triumph Trident T160 had come off the NVT Manufacturing assembly line at the former BSA factory in Small Heath, Birmingham. The news signalled the end of 67 years of motorcycle production at the Midlands site and put the cap on a grim year for the once-great British motorcycle industry.

NVT had built Triumph Trident triples at Small Heath since early 1974. Assembly at Triumph's Meriden factory stopped in 1973, when plans for closure sparked a workers' occupation and blockade. Triple engines had always been made by BSA, but critical machinery and jigs locked in at Meriden had to be expensively replicated to get Trident output rolling at Small Heath, initially with the T150V five-speed model. The Meriden-developed electric-start T160 was launched in March 1975, but within months NVT's mounting debts saw Norton maker Norton-Villiers in liquidation, ending Commando production in Wolverhampton. The Trident's future was in jeopardy, but there was some solace for Small Heath's shrinking workforce.

While a lucrative order from the Saudi Arabian authorities for nearly 600 police Nortons could no longer be fulfilled, they were deftly replaced by suitably modified T160s. Averting legal obstacles, hundreds of modified triples were built or converted from standard machines, the 'last T160' seen in *MCN*'s December 24 issue (pictured above) being one of them. However, the Saudi order was eventually cancelled, leaving 130 machines in the UK.

The formation of NVT Engineering Ltd with a £¾m cash injection allowed Small Heath works manager Al Cave and his small band of workers to start up contract engineering in the old service department. To help raise cash, more standard triples were built from parts to hand in 1976, and former NVT sales executive Mike Jackson recalls rounding-up crated and warehoused T160s – especially in the US, where sales had been slow. They were distributed through the trade at knock-down prices, while leftover Saudi T160s were marketed in 1977 as the civilian Cardinal, a model name coined by Jackson.

Plans for 900cc and 1000cc triples never reached fruition and it would be left to the Meriden workers' co-operative to maintain volume large-capacity motorcycle production in Britain – until it, too, succumbed to financial collapse in 1983.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76

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Norton CS1

The name stands for Cam Shaft One – this is Norton's first foray into the world of overhead cam engines. It pre-dated the International model Rick owns, so how do the two compare?

Words **RICK PARKINGTON** Photography **GARY MARGERUM**

Norton
Norton
6914

ABOVE Dented headlamp and patina are all part of this bike's charm

RIGHT Oil cap has Best & Lloyd logo – a reminder to check the level

BELOW Tank-mounted speedo only goes up to 80mph, though it was capable of a bit more in its heyday

'It's a bike with a vintage feel, but an engine more ready for modern roads'

Norton's CS1 was a landmark – the factory's first overhead camshaft model. At the time, although most four-strokes had a camshaft somewhere in the engine, to describe your motor as 'a cammy' or just 'camshaft' meant it was overhead – and that was pretty damn special.

You can feel it now, even on modern roads. Riding this time-capsule 1929 Norton CS1 transports you back to a time when the owner of a cammy Norton was definitely 'Jack the Lad'. The 500cc engine is punchy and willing to rev, with a delightful bonk-bonk-bonk note from the curious twin-barrel silencer – devised because, even back then, good citizens complained that motorcycles were unbearably noisy.

Decades later, kicking up dry leaves on a CS1 still makes you feel good, but I can see in it a strange mix of ancient and modern. From the pilot's seat, it has a loping feel that's similar to a fast flat tanker – long, low and brutally purposeful – but heavier built. The engine, though, feels newer – more anxious to rev, maybe lighter in the flywheel. It's a bike with a vintage feel, but an engine more ready for modern roads.

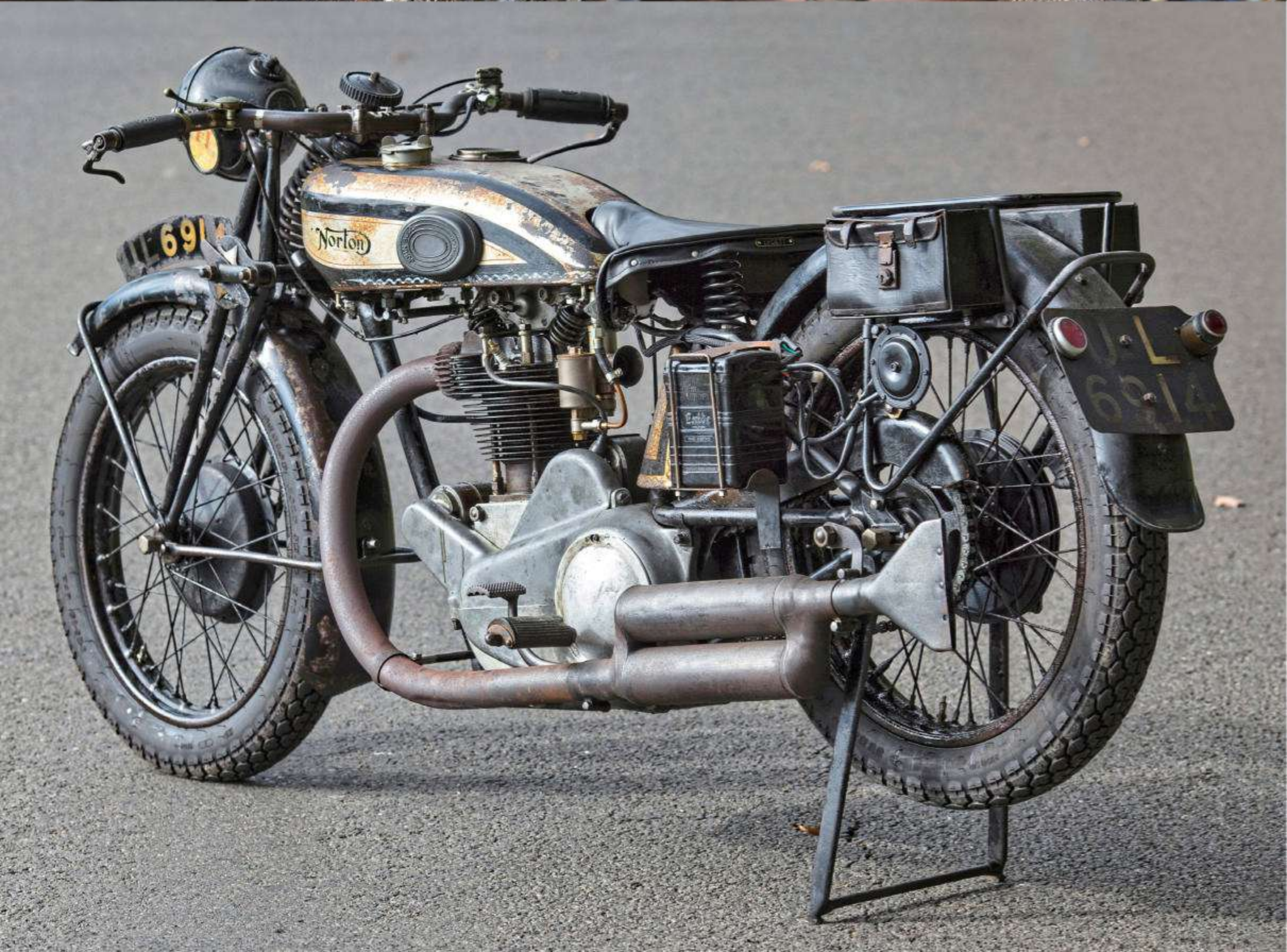
The straight-line stability of the chassis suggests you could dance an Irish jig on the footrests without the 'bars flinching – but while that may sound as though it needs a strong hand to get round corners, a quick zig-zag manoeuvre on a quiet road dispelled that idea. It's just that it approaches cornering with the same sort of dedication it applies to forging dead ahead; I suppose the best way to describe the handling is 'trustworthy'. Well, that's racing pedigree for you. It's truly remarkable just how rapidly motorcycles evolved – and how good they became – in the decade following World War I.

The mid-1920s brought a feeling that overhead-valve engines, like side-valves a few years before, had reached a pinnacle of racing development – and overhead cam was the next step. To get more power from an engine, you either need bigger bangs or more bangs per minute – and the main restriction on rpm is ensuring the valves keep up with piston movement. The longer the valve train – the assembled components between cam and valve – the more sluggish the valves become. Fitting the cam adjacent to the valve and dispensing with cam followers, tappets and pushrods permits higher revs; so around 1926, a flutter of overhead cam designs emerged from manufacturers aiming for TT victory. But for most the experiment was a costly mistake, with the new TT engines proving no better – worse even – than pushrod models.

With hindsight, the problem was obvious – nobody had factored-in the extent to which race cam profiles had been sharpened to accommodate lost motion in their previously gangly valve trains. Direct action from an overhead cam made these previously successful profiles way too extreme.

Velocette were first to solve the problem, using the stop-frame view of a stroboscope. Analysis revealed just how much the pushrods whipped and flexed at high revs, reducing valve lift and duration. It took a while for Norton to catch up, but luckily they were not

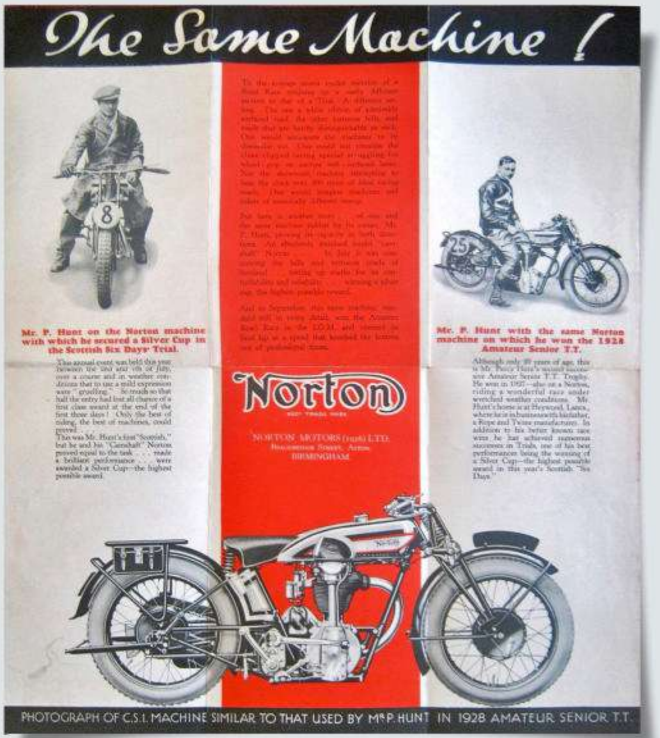
Norton


Norton

direct competitors. Refined and effective, Velocette were a fencer holding a poised rapier against Norton's bare-knuckle pub brawler – but Velo concentrated mainly on the 350cc class. Norton produced a 350 version of the CS1 – the CJ, 'Camshaft Junior', but their reputation depended on their five-hundreds.

The CS1 was designed by Norton's Walter Moore and was soon dubbed the 'cricket bat' for its long straight-sided timing cover with the bevel-drive tube 'handle' on top. Moore had been asked to produce a cammy race motor with limited time and budget; consequently he didn't deviate too far from the successful pushrod Model 18. His design used a single camshaft with two lobes, mounted in a removable cambox bolted to the cylinder head. Drive was by bevel gears top and bottom of a vertical shaft enclosed in a plated tube.

Far removed from the splash-lubricated crankcase, the cambox needed a strong oil supply, rendering the old 'total loss' drip-feed system useless. Instead, Moore designed a recirculating oil pump – it returned oil fed to the engine back to the tank, but also pumped oil up to the cambox, which returned to the sump via the



The Same Machine!

Mr. P. Hunt on the Norton machine with which he secured a Silver Cup in the Scottish Six Days' Trial.

Mr. P. Hunt with the same Norton machine on which he won the 1928 Amateur Senior T.T.

Norton

NORTON MOTORS (1926) LTD.

BIRMINGHAM

PHOTOGRAPH OF C.S.I. MACHINE SIMILAR TO THAT USED BY MR P. HUNT IN 1928 AMATEUR SENIOR T.T.

NORTON MOTORS LTD

Norton's sales brochure shows how keen they were to emphasise the similarity between the roadgoing CS1 and their TT-winning overhead cam race machines

Norton's cammy family

1927 Slow-to-change Norton recognise their successful ohv racers are nearing the end of the line. Designer Walter Moore provides a new overhead camshaft version of the 79 x 100 500cc Model 18. Named the CS1, it's fitted into a new-generation full cradle saddle-tank frame and wins the Senior TT.

1928 A road model CS1 is launched. Norton's first saddle-tank model, it has a kickstart and touring ratio gearbox. A 348cc CJ version is produced and entered in the Junior TT (backed by pushrod models, as was the CS1). In a deeply disappointing race, both 500 and 350 models perform poorly with many retirements. Development effort is poured into overhead cam models to solve reliability problems.

1929 The race team abandon the pushrod models and concentrate on ohc racers in 350 and 500cc capacities. But again they are met with very limited success; only one bike completes the TT, taking fourth place in the Senior race.

1930 Walter Moore leaves Norton, taking his 'cricket bat' with him, to work for NSU in Germany. Their new model is so similar that someone comes up with the wisecrack 'NSU – Norton Spares Used'. Norton appoints Arthur Carroll to design a better 'cammy' engine, which is fitted to the CJ and CS1 and proves reliably successful.

1932 Racing success promotes the launch of a super sports model, the International, tuned and fitted with a race tank and close-ratio gears. Popularity of the standard model fades, as riders either want the racy Inter or the easily-maintained ohv models. The CS1 remains in production as the 'poor man's Inter' until 1940, but is not listed post-war.

TEMPORARY
MOTOR CYCLE
REGISTRATION
VALID TO 30th JUNE, 1931, ONLY
Issued on behalf of the Highway Board
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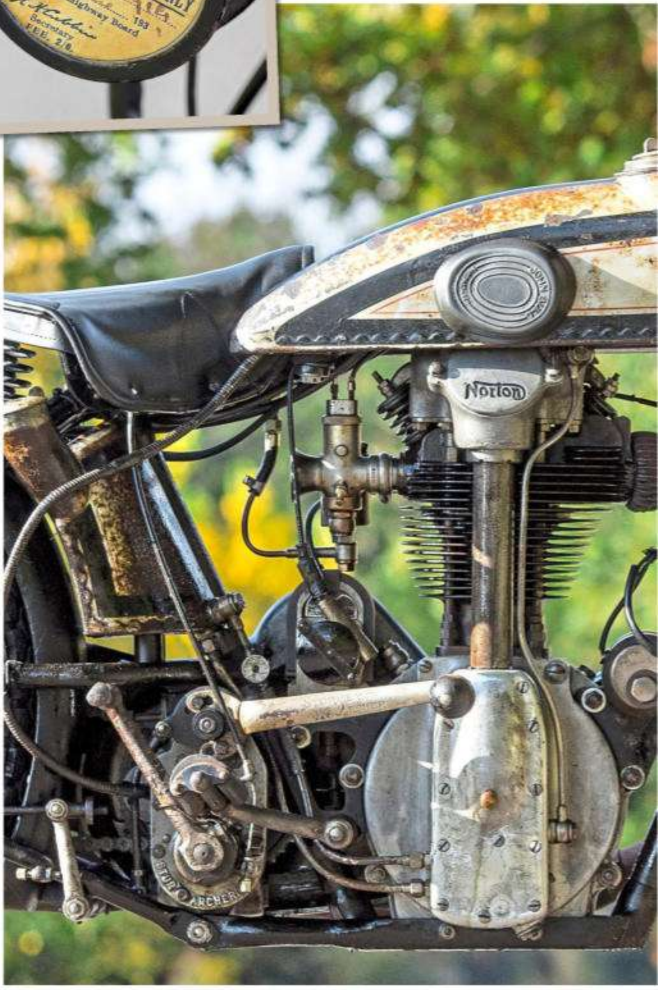
LEFT When owner Mick (inset right) bought it, the tax disc in the holder was from June 1931 **BELOW** Straight-sided timing cover with bevel-drive tube 'handle' led to 'cricket bat' tag



Riding the CS1 is a true timewarp experience, although it does feel ahead of its time

bevel shaft tube. Unusually, as well as a metering screw on the supply, the CS1 had an adjustable scavenge – the sump pick-up was drilled eccentrically in a barrel that could be rotated to raise or lower sump level.

All this, married to the tried-and-tested bottom end sounds like a good combination – but the 1927 TT loomed and Moore was allegedly working on the works entries right up to the wire. Two CS1s were entered alongside pushrod models... just in case. In the event, Stanley Woods led for four laps, setting a new record lap at 70.9mph before the clutch failed, leaving Alec Bennett to take the second CS1 to victory at 68.41mph. Stanley Woods went on to further successes in Continental races and the CS1 became part of the Norton model range for 1928.

A CS1 ridden by Tim Hunt also won the 1928 Amateur TT (forerunner of the Manx GP), but this great start for the 'cricket bat' engine proved unsustainable. Despite the factory devoting a foolhardy amount of time and effort into the new TT engine, Hunt's victory was one of very few successes in 1928 and '29. This resulted in Walter Moore leaving Norton to make remarkably similar 'cricket bats' for NSU in Germany, while Norton engaged young designer Arthur Carroll to make something better. Carroll's (admittedly Velocette inspired) 'International' design gave Norton the success they were seeking – and although Carroll himself died on a motorcycle five years later, his input kept Norton on the leader boards for the next 20 years.

'Such an untouched original bike should be left well alone'

The enduring appeal of Norton is largely due to the shameless way they poured their retail profits into racing. Being lucky enough to own an International from the first 'glory days' of the mid-1930s, I have often wondered what the difference was between the CS1 and the Inter. Now I think I know.

I'm a great lover of unrestored bikes – and the CS1 I'm about to ride exemplifies that desciption. The orange stain seeping through the tank's traditional Norton silver perfectly echoes the autumn leaves around me on this bright but chilly day. The 'patina' tag may have been hijacked to justify high prices for clapped-out bikes, but this is the real thing.

When owner Mick Adams (inset left) bought this CS1, it had been off the road for decades. Given its scruffy condition, Mick sought advice as to whether he should restore it or leave it in original paint and just do a sympathetic refurb. Some said that being Norton's flagship model of the time, it deserved to be restored to its former glory, while others felt such an untouched and original bike should be left well alone. Admittedly, there was a dent in the headlamp and the handlebar was bent,

Trustworthy handling and enough performance for modern roads make it a satisfying ride – not a great deal of ground clearance, though…

SPECIFICATION | 1929 NORTON CS1

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION **Type** Four-stroke single, overhead camshaft **Dimensions** 79 x 100mm **Capacity** 490cc **Power** 25bhp at 5200rpm **Compression ratio** 7.0:1 **Carburation** Binks 2 Jet **Clutch** Wet multiplate **Gearbox** Three-speed Sturmey Archer LS (touring ratio) **CHASSIS** **Frame** Tubular steel, single downtube cradle **Front suspension** Friction-damped Webb/Norton girder fork **Rear suspension** Rigid **Brakes** Front: 8in half-width singe-leading-shoe drum. Rear: 8in half-width single-leading-shoe drum **Wheels** Spoked with steel rims **Tyres** Front: 3.25 x 19. Rear: 3.50 x 19 **DIMENSIONS** **Wheelbase** 57in (1448mm) **Weight** 320lb (145kg) **PERFORMANCE** **Top speed** 80mph .

but the most recent tax disc in the holder was an Isle of Man issue from June 1931 – back when the canny Manx charged road fund for a week on the Island. Little worn from new, it's hard not to suppose that enthusiasm got the better of the owner while visiting the 1931 TT, causing him to crash the bike and never return it to the road.

I was one of the people whose opinion Mick sought – and being on the 'preservation over restoration' side, the best way I could put it was that if he just did what was necessary to put the bike back on the road, it could always be restored later... but once the original finish is gone, it's gone forever. I was delighted to find Mick chose to go for the sympathetic refurbishment and has never regretted it.

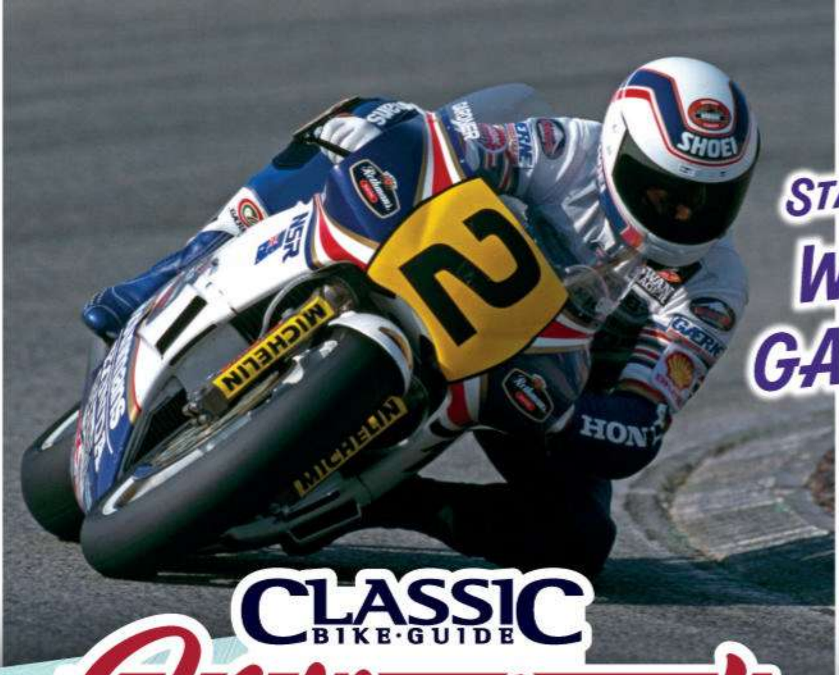
My own 1935 Inter is also largely unrestored, but there the similarity ends. The Inter is an extremely capable pre-war classic which can sustain 70mph on a motorway – a pretty remarkable achievement for a 90-year-old motorcycle. Despite being not much older, the CS1 is a much bigger leap into the past. The cambox is noisy and while both brakes on the Inter are positive, the CS1's front is spongy and slows rather than stops the wheel.

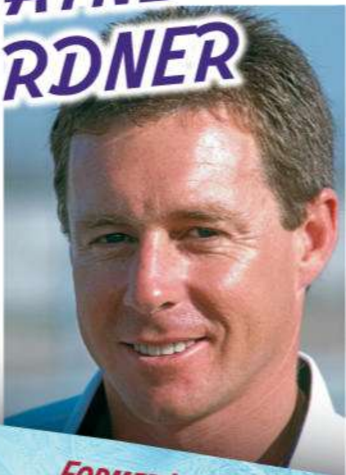
The gear ratios are also wider. The Inter has a four-speed 'box with close ratios, but the CS1 has touring ratios – with only three gears in the 'box, close ratios were only practical for race bikes. But both have a similarly light and smooth clutch action and a foot-change, but on the CS1 it's 'DR style' – a hand-change lever lowered and bent for foot control, as used by World War I despatch riders wrestling belt-drive Triumphs over shattered terrain. Unlike on the Inter, there's no positive stop – I found that the side of my foot was sensitive enough to feel the engagement click and avoid going top-to-bottom in one sweep, but even then it's a yoga-like stretch to reach the gearlever. I was also surprised to find an 80mph speedo, given that the Inter was tested at just under the hundred.

So, yes, the Inter is better than a CS1 in all respects. But… it's no credit to a newer bike to be 'better' – a new bike is 'better' than an old one, however strong your rose-tinted specs. The point is that you choose a classic to find something that has been lost by progress – for some it's a memory, for others it's just a taste of how things were once upon a time... time travel without a fare.

Certainly my Inter is years ahead of its time; we once chased, caught and overtook a VFR800 Honda crossing the Verandah on the Island. Close your eyes and it could be 20 or more years newer than it is – but if I want to immerse myself in the past, it's too capable. Ride the CS1 and you're back there, complete with pipe, sports jacket and gauntlets.

I'm always looking for bikes with enough performance to make them capable for modern roads, but still with that relaxed '20s feel – and I think that's what the CS1 delivers. In a perfect world, I'd have an Inter *and* a CS1 – but if I did, I think I'd ride the CS1 most.





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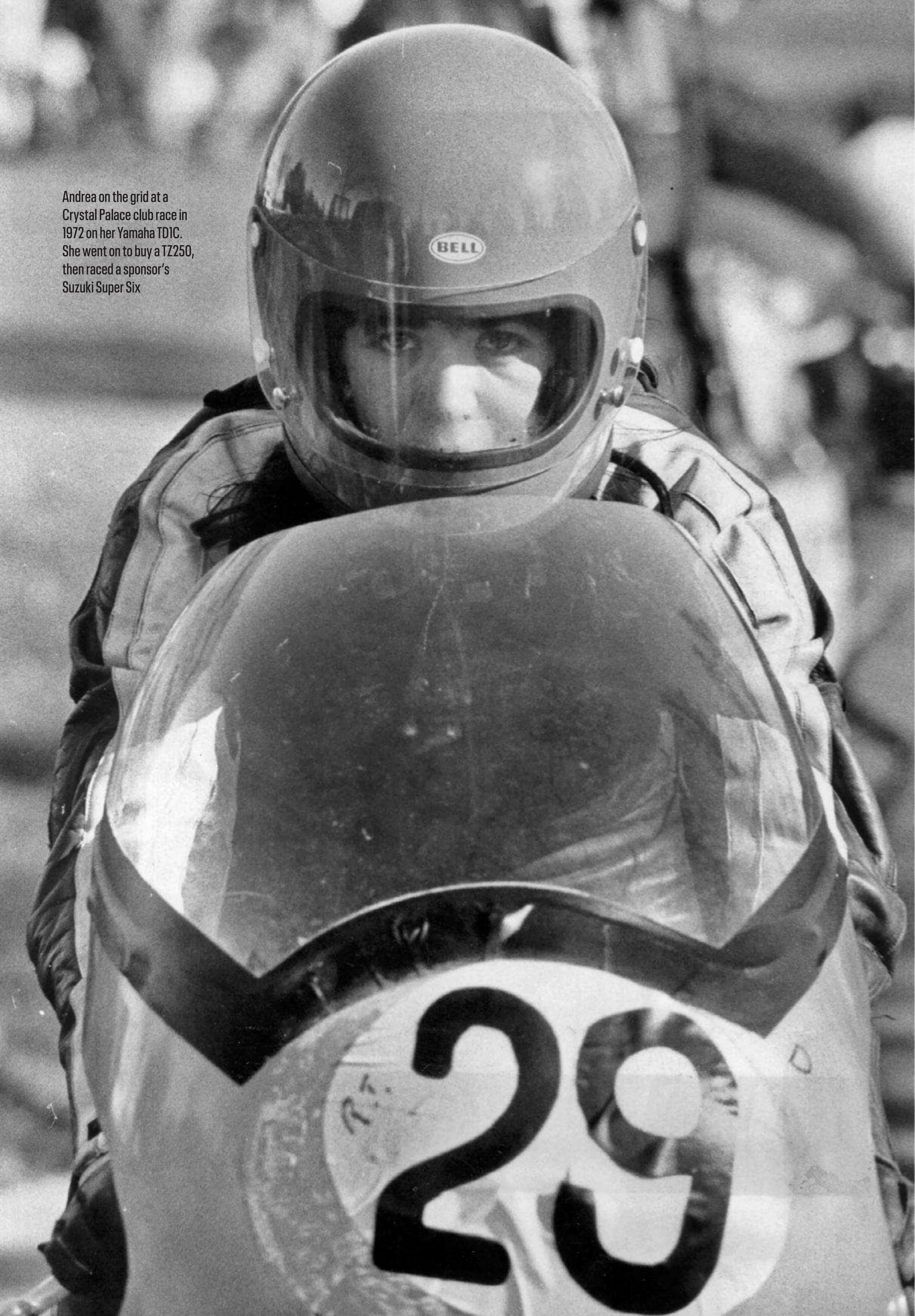


Andrea on the grid at a Crystal Palace club race in 1972 on her Yamaha TD1C. She went on to buy a TZ250, then raced a sponsor's Suzuki Super Six

Classic Bike

AT LUNCH WITH...

Andrea Coleman

Steeped in bikes? Just a bit. She runs the Riders for Health charity, her dad designed the AJS 7R and she's best mates with Kenny Roberts. And that's just the start...

Interview **JOHN WESTLAKE**

There must be some part of Andrea Coleman's life that's normal, but I'm struggling to find it. Her dad designed the Matchless G50, AJS 7R and Porcupine, so her childhood was spent fixing bikes and talking airflow. Her older brother was the racer and engineer Peter Williams, so her teens involved running errands for him at short circuits and the TT. And her first husband was the GP ace Tom Herron, so her twenties were a blizzard of European GPs, having kids, laughing a lot and then – tragically – recovering from his death. And we haven't even got to the bit she's famous for – co-founding the world's greatest motorcycle charity.

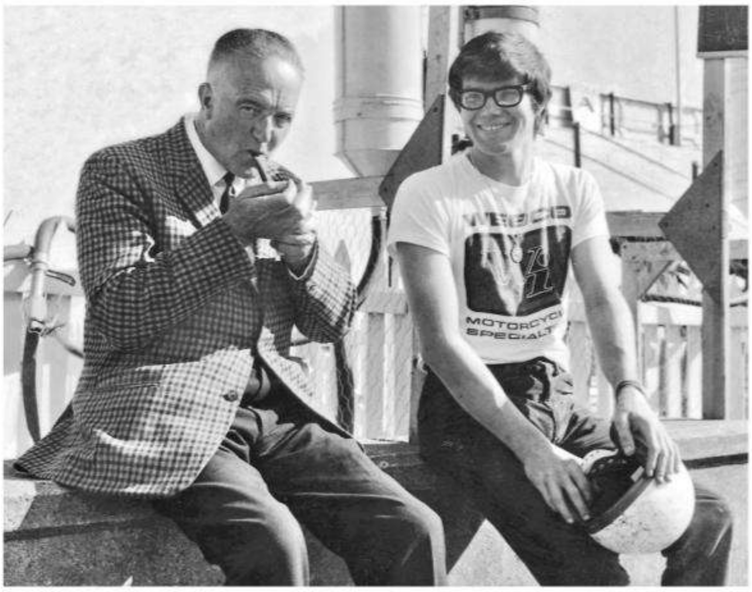
"I've always loved racing," she says by way of explanation as we wait for lunch at her local pub. "I don't know why exactly, but I always have. As a 13-year-old, I bought a record player and got the LPs of TT bikes so I could listen to the sound of the MV and the Suzuki with the 14-speed gearbox going through Sulby Bridge. That wasn't normal for a 13-year-old girl – though I did buy some pop records too."

By then, Andrea was steeped in bikes thanks to her dad, Jack Williams. In fact, Jack's motorcycle career dominated almost every aspect of Andrea's childhood. "I was born at Knebworth because he was working at Vincent HRD, then we moved to Bexley because he got a job with AMC at Plumstead.

"When I was growing up, amazing people like Bob McIntyre [the TT and GP winner] would come and stay – when I was six, I remember sitting in the airing cupboard and chatting away to Bob as he shaved. Everyone who came round was a motorcycle racer. Jock [West – the racer who went on to work for AMC] was my godfather and my mum's brother Tommy [Bullus – Brookands racer who went to work for NSU in Germany] raced, so it was both sides of the family. In fact, my grandfather on my mum's side won a motorcycle race from Edinburgh to Bradford in 1903. I was immersed in racing."

That wasn't as idyllic as it sounds, though. Her dad was a workaholic whose own unusual childhood – he was left on a doorstep as a baby and brought up by three women – didn't make him a doting father. "He would lock himself away in his office and do all his slide-rule stuff," says Andrea. "I really liked it when I could go in and he would tell me about airflow or whatever. I guess that's why I was interested in that side of things – it was the only way I could get attention from him.

HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



REDLINE BOOKS

ABOVE Andrea's dad Jack Williams (left) and brother Peter. Both were touched by engineering genius

"He was so clever. The G45, Porcupine, 7R, G50... I just thought they were so beautiful. And when he was at Vincent he was involved in the development of the Black Shadow – another bike that's beautiful while also being an engineering icon.

"But what impacted me more deeply than the engineering was motorcycling's ability to give you freedom. And I liked the environment around bikes. I liked the smell, I liked what they meant. I loathed school and I suppose I needed to find a place. And my place was in motorcycling."

Fortunately, Peter was just as smitten with motorcycles as his sister, so when their dad was hidden away designing, Andrea could hang out with her big brother as he started climbing the racing ladder. "Peter was eight years older than me and I got to know his racer buddies – people like Ron Chandler, Mike Hailwood and Rex Butcher, who were the generation connected with Peter rather than my dad."

Eventually, Andrea grew weary of the budding racers, though. "I decided I didn't like the environment because I was a lot younger than them and they gave me the creeps with all their key-swapping stuff. So when I was 18, I decided to go to the Olympic Games in Mexico and then..." Andrea segues into a tale about driving to Canada with Mike (now Michelle) Duff [the GP racer] before that last bit sinks in. Hang on, you did what?

"I went to the Mexico Olympics," she says, as if she was describing popping to Tesco rather than heading to Mexico City as a solo 18-year-old female in 1968. "I wanted to do something interesting and get away," she explains. "I tried hitchhiking from New York but had several dodgy experiences, so I took the Greyhound bus and slept on people's floors." Having met Andrea before, I knew she was clever, determined and charming. I add fearless to the list.

When she got back, Andrea decided to go racing. She bought a Yamaha TD1C, then got a TZ250 and also raced a Suzuki Super Six loaned to her by a sponsor. She wasn't in her brother's league, but became a handy club racer: "I wasn't the greatest rider, but I never finished lower than 10th and apart from a women's-only race, I never won. I really enjoyed it. Everyone was really supportive and no one was misogynistic except when I beat them. They didn't like that. But racers don't like anyone beating them."

ANDREA COLEMAN ARCHIVE

BELOW An AJS Porcupine was on display at the 2024 Silverstone MotoGP. When Andrea told the MotoGP riders that her dad designed it, none of them believed her!

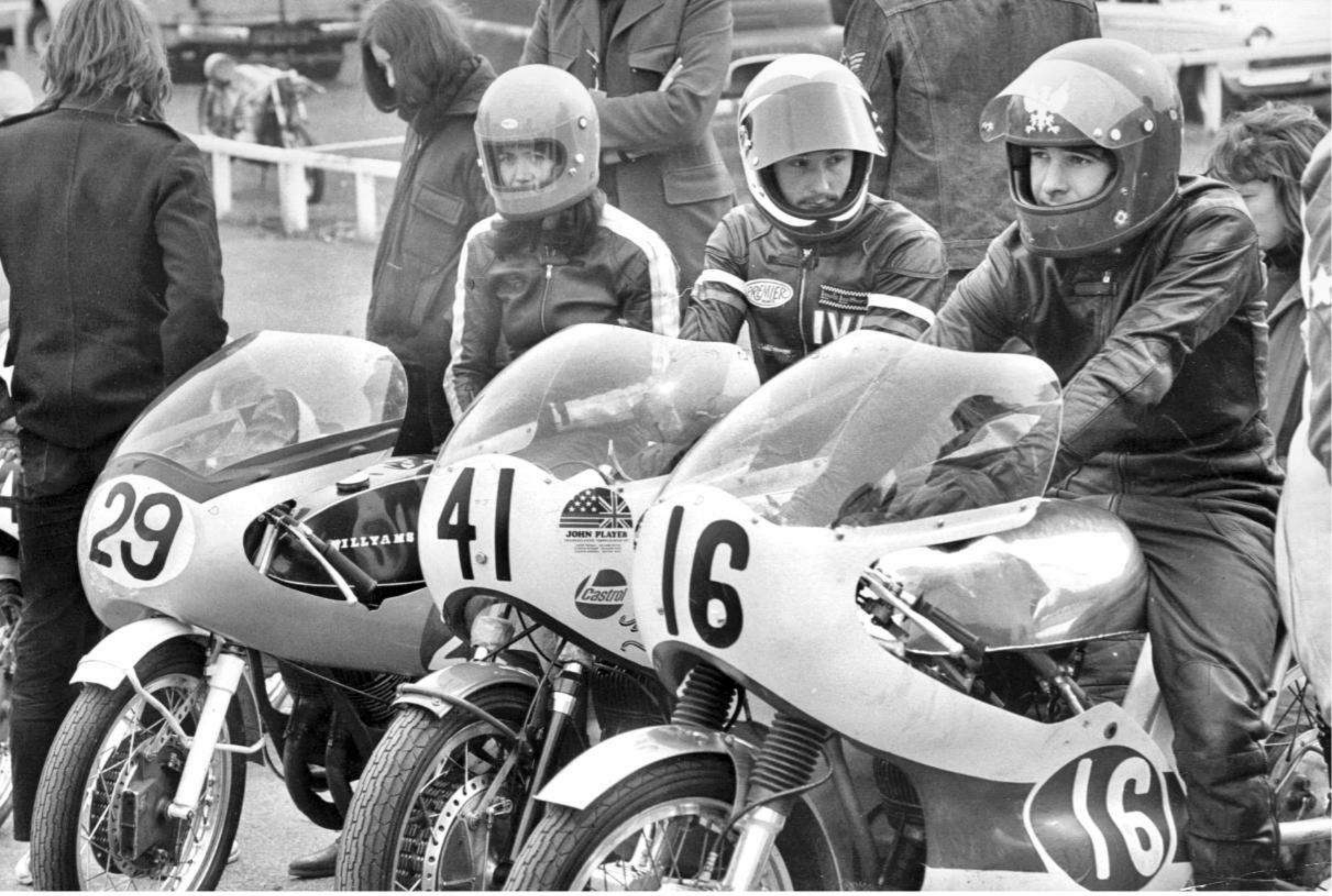
Having been to the Isle of Man so often with Peter, Andrea wanted to race at the Manx, but was refused entry because she was a woman. That didn't go down well. "What annoyed me was that they said: 'We've got enough trouble at the Manx without women riding in it'. They were worried that if a woman got hurt, there would be more headlines than if a man got hurt. It was so unfair. I told them that unless they relented I'd lie down in the track like a suffragette." Alas, the threat didn't work, and Andrea decided to give up on the Manx dream.

She had other things to be getting on with anyway. By then, she'd met Tom Herron – and after breaking ribs and a collarbone while racing at the Mid Antrim in Northern Ireland, decided she'd stop her racing and concentrate on helping his career.

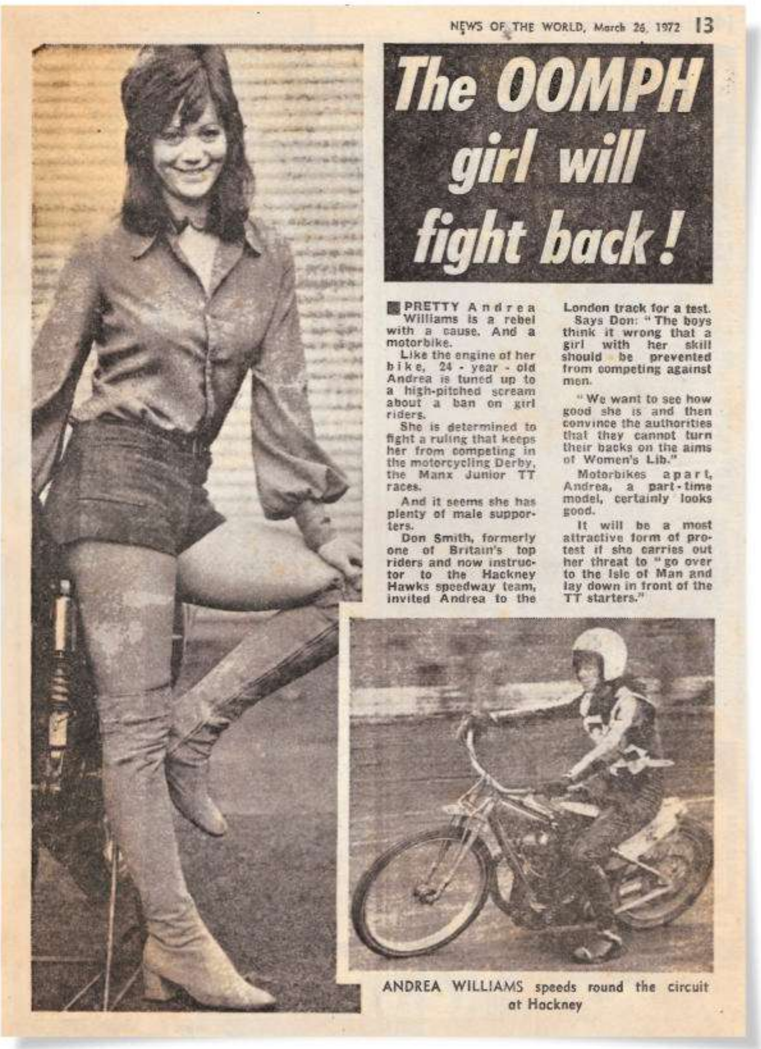
"I sold the TZ250 and Tom sold his 350 Yamaha, and we spent the proceeds on an ex-Kel Carruthers Yamaha for him. That was the point I became his manager – getting sponsorship, battling for start money and so on. I knew that Tom had such a lot of talent and I wanted to help him make the most of it. I wanted to help him be the person he could be – not just his riding, but emotionally too. And we were having so much fun. He was such a funny, generous man. A really unusual person."

Andrea's face lights up as she talks about Tom and the time they spent driving round Europe to the GPs, scraping a living from start money, making friends for life and generally having a ball. One of those friends was Kenny Roberts, who parachuted into the GP paddock two years after Tom and Andrea had their twins, Kim and Zoe.

"When Kenny arrived, Tom was doing really well [he was Barry Sheene's team-mate on the factory Suzuki by then], and we became good friends because our children



HULTON ARCHIVE/GETTY IMAGES



NEWS OF THE WORLD, March 26, 1972 13

The OOMPH girl will fight back!

PRETTY Andrea Williams is a rebel with a cause. And a motorbike.

Like the engine of her bike, 24-year-old Andrea is tuned up to a high-pitched scream about a ban on girl riders.

She is determined to fight a ruling that keeps her from competing in the motorcycling Derby, the Manx Junior TT races.

And it seems she has plenty of male supporters.

Don Smith, formerly one of Britain's top riders and now instructor to the Hackney Hawks speedway team, invited Andrea to the London track for a test.

Says Don: "The boys think it wrong that a girl with her skill should be prevented from competing against men.

"We want to see how good she is and then convince the authorities that they cannot turn their backs on the aims of Women's Lib."

Motorbikes apart, Andrea, a part-time model, certainly looks good.

It will be a most attractive form of protest if she carries out her threat to "go over to the Isle of Man and lay down in front of the TT starters."

ANDREA WILLIAMS speeds round the circuit at Hackney

NEWS GROUP NEWSPAPERS/ANDREA COLEMAN

ABOVE Andrea (#29) in the holding area at Crystal Palace in 1972. Her brother Peter bought her a day at the Chas Mortimer race school (her instructor was Paul Smart) as a birthday present when she was 16 and she'd wanted to race ever since. She eventually called it a day after suffering a big crash while road racing in Ireland

ANDREA COLEMAN ARCHIVE

ABOVE Looking mean and moody on her new Yamaha TZ250 in 1974
LEFT A story about a young woman fighting for her right to race in the Manx GP was always going to interest the tabloids – and sure enough, in March 1972 the *News of the World* picked up on Andrea's battle. Even now, at the age of 77, she still rails against the fusty, male-dominated management of modern motorcycle racing

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ROWLAND WHITE

ABOVE Andrea, Tom and their twins Zoe and Kim outside their home in Ireland in the late 1970s

were the same age. We'd be in the paddock early in the morning, sitting together chatting while the children were playing. Kenny won those world championships while looking after his kids as well. How he did it, I'll never know. He's an amazing person."

I mention that Andrea's depiction of Kenny Roberts as a chatty friend and doting father doesn't tally with his reputation as an abrasive, fearsome hardman. "Well, he could be all of those things, but he is genuinely one of the most lovely people I know. There was one occasion when Tom and Jon Ekerold [the 1980 350cc world champion] came ninth and tenth at Assen and they were both really annoyed [with their results] so they went out that evening.

"At 5am Sandy Ekerold [Jon's wife] knocked on my door and was worried Jon and Tom were out with women. I said: 'I can tell you now, they're not with women'. I knew where they'd be – in a cell. Sandy stayed with the kids while I went out looking for them – and sure enough, they were in the police station after getting into a fight.

"Assen is always just before Spa and I had no idea how long it was going to take me to get Tom out of prison. Then Kenny came round and said: 'Here's my envelope of prize money – you might need it this week'. And off he went. No one asked him to do that – that's just what he's like. If you're Kenny's friend, he will always be there for you.

"Anyway, that story didn't end there. When we were back in Belfast [the couple were married and living in Ireland by then], I had to take Tom to a solicitor to address the Assen issues, and on our way a milk float reversed around a corner right in front of our van.

"Tom got out to 'discuss' the manoeuvre with the milkman, so later at the solicitor's I was there explaining how Tom was not a fighty person and that the stories about him hitting the police couldn't be true… and sitting next to me was Tom with a split cheek from a fight with a milkman. Tom was so Irish – he'd have fights with people and the next minute they'd have their arms round each other in the pub. He was an amazing man."

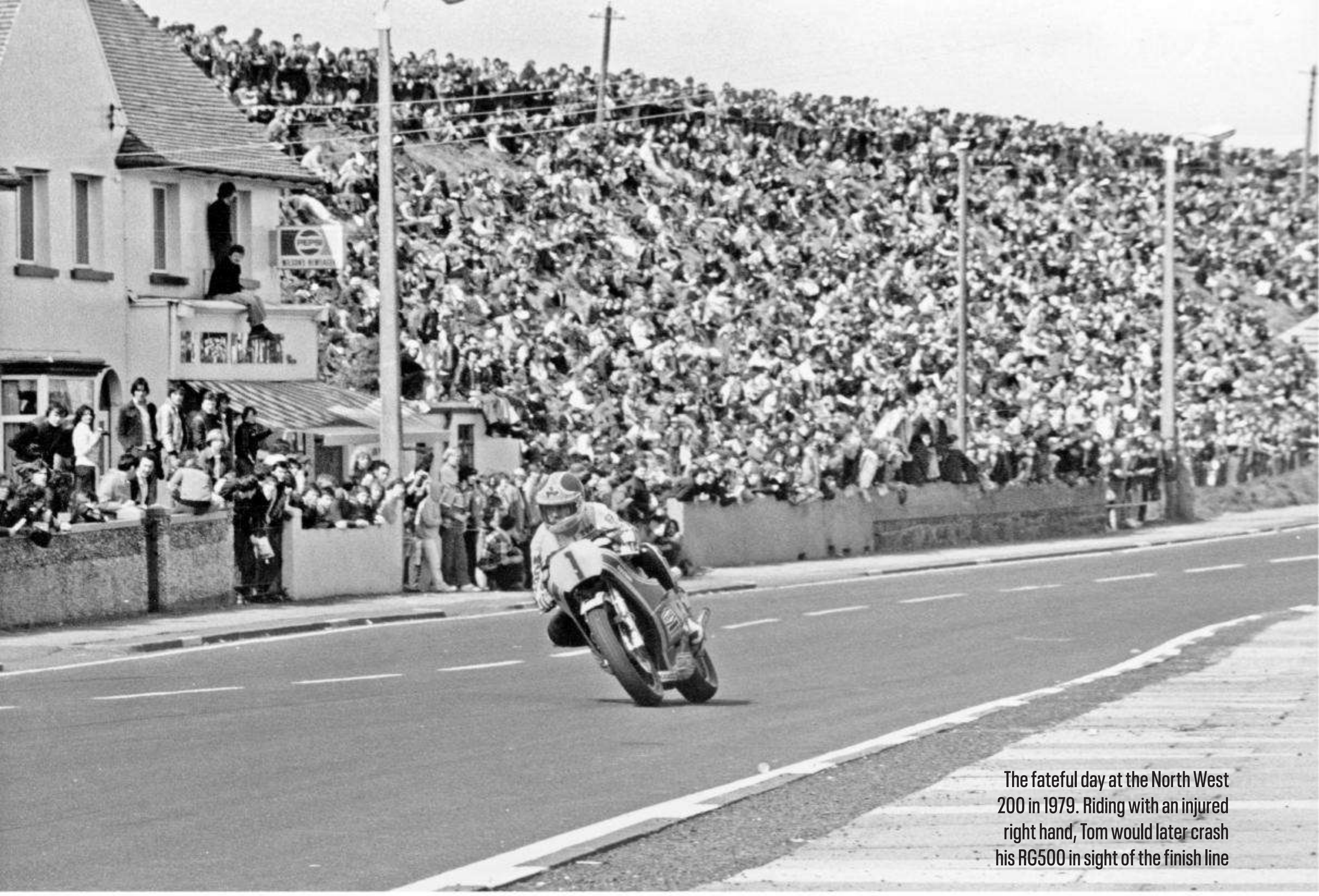
I know Andrea has spoken many times about Tom's death, but I'm apprehensive as our conversation rolls closer to the fateful day in 1979. She looks so happy when talking about his life that I can't pluck up the courage to ask about his death. Fortunately, Andrea has more than enough bravery for both of us and takes up the story unprompted.

"In 1979 Tom crashed at the Jarama GP and hurt his right thumb," she says. "He was meant to go straight to the North West and TT from Jarama, and I was very concerned about him doing them with a damaged thumb. He flew straight to London for treatment, and I drove the van and trailer with the kids back home to our new house which had just been built on the Isle of Man. Tom was so proud of the house, because he'd earned it through racing – he was always showing plans of it to Kenny.

"He flew from London straight to the North West while I stayed at home

B MARTIN

BELOW The GP circus allowed Tom to escape Ireland and broaden his horizons, but he still loved the place. Here Andrea interrupts his winter training



The fateful day at the North West 200 in 1979. Riding with an injured right hand, Tom would later crash his RG500 in sight of the finish line

BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

and sorted out the house. Then – and I will never know why – I booked a private plane to Belfast and a cab to the North West. I got Pat Nelson [GP rider Billie Nelson's widow] to look after the kids.

"Tom was obviously shocked to see me and asked what I was doing there. I said: 'Because I want to ask you not to ride'. He said: 'But I'm earning £16,000,' and I said I didn't care about the money.

"He said he'd be fine and he'd take it easy, but I knew that wasn't going to happen – he was riding a works bike in front of a massive crowd in Northern Ireland. He said something like: 'I'm going to live until I'm very old', or something. Silly bugger." Andrea pauses.

Of course, Tom did ride. He got his mate Hector Neill – now the TAS race team owner – to cut off the plaster cast on his right hand, and off he went, later crashing on the last lap at the fast Juniper Hill bend. He hit a lamppost within sight of the finish line.

"I immediately knew something was wrong. I don't know if it was me, or whether it really happened, but I remember the whole place going completely silent. Everything suddenly went still.

"In Jarama, I'd kicked up a fuss when no one told me about his crash there, so apparently in the ambulance Tom was telling the medics they had to let me know or he'd be in terrible trouble. Poor Tom. There he was on his way to dying and he was worried about me being cross with him.

"I got to the hospital and the lovely Frank Kennedy [of the Armoy Armada, who died from his injuries months later], and Warren Willing [who survived and went on to guide Mick Doohan to five world championships] were in there too, after crashing. Frank and Warren's wives were crying and panicking and I found myself

BP
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THE PRESS ASSOCIATION

LEFT Tom was at his peak in 1979, riding for Texaco Heron Suzuki in GPs with a certain Barry Sheene as a team-mate

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ROWLAND WHITE

BELOW Tom on his way to winning the Ulster 250GP in 1975. He won five Ulster GPs

ANDREA COLEMAN ARCHIVE

ABOVE Friends and relatives pose after Tom Herron's memorial. That's Kenny Roberts and Mike Hailwood on the right-hand side; while Kork Ballington is at the back left with the 'tache, and Billy Guthrie is in the centre at the back

talking them down and comforting them. Then the doctors called me. The corridor they took me down seemed so, so long. It felt like I was falling. Anyway, Tom died before I got in there." Andrea looks down and clears her throat. "Silly bugger," she says quietly. "He never did get to see his new house."

We sit in silence for a few moments. Andrea takes a deep breath and continues. "After Tom died, I dashed into all sorts of things. I didn't sit quietly and face it. I suppose I couldn't.

"Then Jim Doyle [Randy Mamola's manager] offered me a job doing Randy's PR. At the time he was known as 'Superbrat', and my job was to turn him into Archangel Gabriel. Which actually was very easy because he loves kids, so I took him to hospitals to cheer up sick children. The problem was that he's a very emotional person and ended up crying all the time. He was more upset than they were, so we decided to do other stuff."

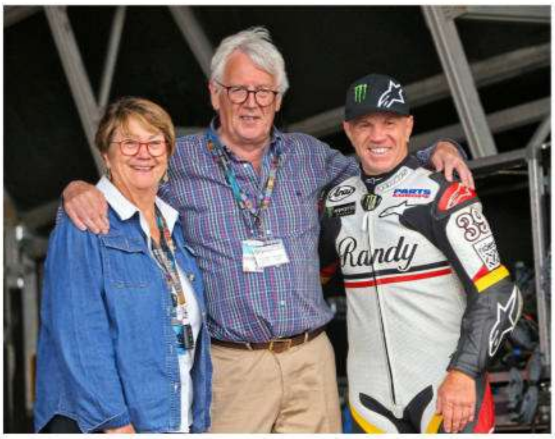
Eventually, in 1986, they hit upon the idea of auctioning off riders' kit and memorabilia. The first auction raised the equivalent of £300 for Save the Children and within a few years that figure was £20,000. Then, after a trip to Africa, they saw a direct way that motorcycles could help – getting medical supplies to remote communities. "The big charities were creating vaccines and just hoping it went to the right places – no-one was thinking about transport."

That was the start of Riders for Health, with Andrea, Randy and Andrea's new husband Barry Coleman (a hugely respected motorsport journalist) driving the new charity forward. But the next breakthrough came thanks to Kenny Roberts. "The four of us were having a meeting about how to raise money, when Kenny said: 'I'll tell you what we'll do – we'll have one day before the GP where everyone gives up their time for you, and I'll start it off'.

"So in 1989 at Brands Hatch, he brought John Kocinski, Wayne Rainey, Randy Mamola and Kevin Schwantz and we had these 'fun' races. I remember Trevor Nation really annoyed Wayne by actually trying to beat him. Even now if you mention Trevor Nation to him, he scowls.

Over the years, the Day of Champions evolved into what it is today – a unique opportunity for fans to get close to the riders, wander round the paddock and buy Marc Marquez's knee sliders. And, of course, raise thousands for Riders for Health.

We've finished our coffees and Andrea has to get back to work – she's 77, but retains the same enthusiasm for racing she had as the 13-year-old girl who spent her evenings listening to records of TT exhaust notes. "I do love working with the MotoGP riders. They're racers, and I think I understand racers because I've known so many. In fact," she says as we stroll out of the pub, "I was thinking the other day that I might be the only person alive who knew the first ever GP world champion, Les Graham, and the current one, Jorge Martin..." CB



BONNIE LANE

RIGHT The Riders for Health power trio: Andrea, her husband Barry Coleman and Randy Mamola

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QUALITY STREET

This Honda NS400R is all-but perfect due to owner **Ian Edmondson's** dedication to detail

Words **JIM MOORE** Photography **JASON CRITCHELL**

NS400R
ATAC
REV'IT!

HONDA
Rothmans
RACING
othmans
ONDA
TRAC
SHOEI

If there's one thing that matters to Ian Edmondson, it's quality. As a welding and construction inspector by trade, the need for perfection and seeing a job done properly runs deep. And that, Ian explains while showing me photographs of bikes he's previously owned and has currently, is why he's a Honda man.

His present collection is an eclectic mix ranging from the weird and wacky to the achingly exotic and rare, but they've all got one thing in common – the winged badge on the tank. Standouts include: two RC30s (one an ultra-rare, all-white 'ghost' RC, currently wearing Rothmans rep bodywork), an RC45, Evo Fireblade No.1, Jonathan Rea's 2012 Ten Kate WSB Fireblade, a strange and exceptionally hard-to-find EZ90 Snow and Honda's most exotic race replica, an RC213V-S.

"I've worked outside the UK for years, 10 hours a day, six days a week," says Ian, who originally hails from Cumbria. "So I've been lucky enough to earn well and buy some of the bikes I hankered after as a lad, plus more recent stuff that'll probably never come up for sale again. I'm not a drinker, a smoker or a party guy. Bikes are my vice."

The hankering for an NS400R stems from his days as a welder in the shipyards of Barrow-in-Furness. "It was 1984 when I started and loads of us there had bikes that we'd go to work on. I had a Yamaha RD125LC, then a 350LC, a YPVS, and eventually a Kawasaki GPZ600R. One of the fellas there had an NS400R. I remember it sounding distinctive and looking the business in Rothmans colours – more striking than my LC."

Fast-forward 39 years; Ian and I are standing next to his NS400R in his mate Mark Reynolds' garage. Ian bought the bike in 2019 – but, strangely, this is the first time he's seen it in the metal. "It's complicated," grins Ian. "Ready for this?" OK, fire away...

"I buy bikes from Japan," he tells me, "with the help of expat Graham Crump and his wife Emi at GJC Trading, who are based there. I bought an NS, but when it arrived it wasn't as good as I'd hoped. By then I was on the trail of another one – a better one – so I sold the first NS and decided to keep the second bike instead."

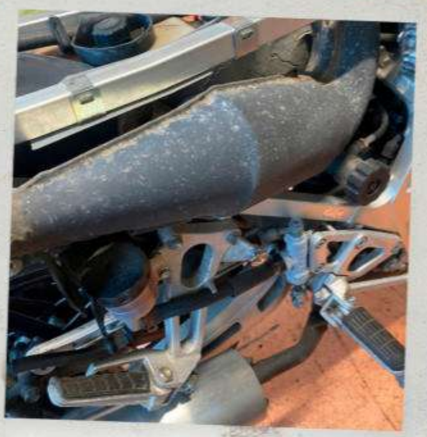
Unfortunately, Ian's job left little time for restoration work or even riding, which is where Mark Reynolds comes in – he's the genius behind this NS400R's meticulous restoration. Like Ian, Mark's a stickler for detail and doing things right. "I'd phone Ian up during the restoration," says Mark, "and tell him I needed an indicator lens or something like that, because one of them was broken. He'd send me four – 'Do the lot' he'd say..."

The quality of Mark's work shines through every component. He's a Rolls-Royce trained classic car restorer by trade, and it shows. "It's not a business," Mark's quick to point out.

HONDA
Rothmans
RACING
TRAC

On guard
The bike's front mudguard got lost during the resto, requiring Ian (on the right here) to source a replacement. Mark (on the left) had to fabricate the 'guard's metal under-brace because the original had rotted beyond repair.

Ian bought the bike from Japan. This is how it arrived – a top present to himself



After standing idle for decades, close inspection revealed plenty of surface corrosion all round

WELCOME TO THE
MAN CAVE
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BRIDGESTONE

Domestic differences

Ian's Japanese-market NS differs from UK bikes with its integrated front indicators, speedo in km per hour, 'speed' warning light that comes on at 50mph (112kph), larger front mudguard, RC30-spec mirrors and 59bhp motor (UK bikes make a claimed 72bhp).

"I've got a day job. This is my hobby; evenings and weekends. My passion."

Mark was always Ian's first choice for the resto – but by the time the bike had made it to the UK, Mark had other projects on the bench. So the NS passed to a mechanic that Ian knew for its initial assessment.

"I knew it was in better nick than the first one," says Ian. "It was showing less than 4500km (2800 miles) on the clock, so it had hardly been used."

But bikes are rarely as good as they look in pictures, and this one was no different. "There was surface corrosion on most components, the paint was marked, cracked and scuffed, and standing idle for most of its near 40-year life had taken its toll on rubber and plastic parts, as well as stuff like the brakes, powervalves and cooling circuit."

Ian's mechanic gave the engine a thorough going over. Most internals were good to go: there was no play in the big ends; bores, pistons and rings were all well within tolerance. Ian bought a replacement clutch, just in case, but the original was decent enough to play its part in the bike's next chapter.

'Bikes are rarely as good as they look in pictures, and this one was no different'

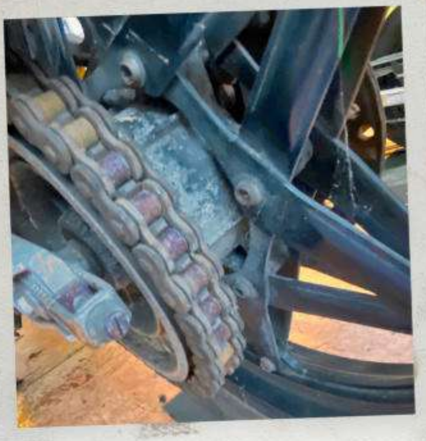
"Once the motor had been gone through, Mark had some free time, so I got the NS over to him to start the resto proper," continues Ian. "Knowing that the engine was good was a huge relief, so Mark could get stuck into the detail."

An NS400R could easily be ruined by a less than fastidious restoration, such was the level of finish afforded this triple by Honda. Beautiful design touches abound, from the faired-in sidestand and enclosed helmet holder, to the braced swingarm and gold-coloured top yoke. Poorly finished components would stick out like a sore thumb. Mark used powdercoat only where necessary and insisted on micron-thin yet immensely tough Cerakote on areas and components where detail was key.

"The wheels, pipes, footpeg hangers, brake master cylinders, disc centres, handlebars, levers, clocks, frame and more were Cerakoted by Stopping Power in Flintshire," explains Mark. "It's not cheap – a lot more than powdercoat – but the finish is like factory."

Hang on, I thought Honda recommended that Comstar wheels weren't to be taken apart?

"That's right," confirms Mark, "but with the correct tool, which Ian got for the job, you can. It's a Honda part with a torx head, so as long as you use that and do the bolts back up



Comstar wheels were in ratty condition, so were dismantled using the correct Honda tool

Along with many other parts, the wheels were Cerakoted before being reassembled

IAN EDMONDSON

Marks's essential tools

Snap-on ¼in drive ratchet

“I've had this for about 20 years. It wasn't cheap at the time - about £90, if I remember correctly. But it's a brilliant tool and has more than earned its worth over the years. It's got a swivel head and is so handy for getting into tight spaces. I use it a lot.”

Snap-on impact screwdriver

“This is my go-to tool when it comes to removing disc bolts - without it, they just round off. In fact, I would never attempt to remove disc bolts without it. This is also around 20 years old and cost me around £150 at the time. An essential bit of kit.”

Milwaukee M12 power tools

“I was always a Snap-on snob, but while the tools are good, Snap-on batteries are not the best. These Milwaukee ratchets are brilliant, with better interchangeable batteries. I use them when stripping bikes, rather than rebuilding. For taking stuff apart they're my absolute go-tos.”

to the correct torque, it's fine. That way I was able to get the bolts stripped and recoated to original finish to match the rims and spokes.”

With the bike on the bench, I'm able to scrutinise every surface. No matter how hard I look, I can't find fault. How Mark has transformed this age-damaged Honda back to showroom condition is remarkable. Many a home mechanic can make an old bike look presentable, but this NS is on another level – proper factory finish. There's no overly thick paint, no incorrectly coated fasteners, or mis-matched paint. With its reapplied Rothmans colours, courtesy of Larry Frost at Illusion Paint, Ian's NS is, well… perfect.

The only concession in terms of finish is the frame. Its box-section aluminium spars wear the slight patina of almost four decades, because it was impossible to have it dipped and reanodised on account of its size. “I'm OK with that,” says Ian. “It keeps a bit of history and originality to the bike.”

‘There's slight patina on the frame, but apart from that Ian's NS is, well... perfect’

Fortunately, it's no trinket. Ian's happy for me to ride his NS – even before him. He remembers the 400R from his shipyard days as sounding “distinctive” – and he's right. A couple of kicks on the starter fire the V3 into life. The crisp cackle from its trio of silencers sounds like three NS125s readying for action; less throaty than a Yamaha RD twin and also quieter than I remember.

Honda ATAC

The NS features Honda's ATAC system (Auto-Controlled Torque Amplification Chambers). Unlike Yamaha's YPVS, which alters exhaust port height via a servo-operated drum, ATAC opens and closes an extra chamber forward of the exhaust port (open at low rpm, closed at high rpm) to increase low down torque without sacrificing top end. Only the NS's front two cylinders feature the technology.

It's comfier, too. The riding position is surprisingly relaxed, with clip-ons mounted above the top yoke and footpegs no more severely positioned than most sport tourers. It is small, however, owing its origins to its quarter-litre stablemate the NS250R.

Performance from the 387cc motor is more akin to a big 250 or a 350 Powervalve than either Yamaha's RD or Suzuki's RG Gamma. Not a lot happens below 7000rpm, although the NS is happy to bimble through town on part throttle. Once the tacho reaches 6500rpm the V3 comes alive, zipping up to the 10,500rpm redline with purposeful fizz, leaving a trail of sweet, white smoke in its wake.

Handling was always the NS's trump card. Back in the mid-'80s this little Honda was considered the finest-handling sports bike available. And it's not hard

RIGHT Beautiful Honda design touches abound, from the faired-in sidestand to the gold-coloured top yoke, enclosed helmet holder and those lovely period Comstar wheels

SPECIFICATION | 1985 HONDA NS400R (*UK spec)

ENGINE/TRANSMISSION Type Liquid-cooled, reed-valve 90° V3 two-stroke with ATAC **Capacity** 387cc **Bore x stroke** 57 x 50.6mm **Compression ratio** 6.7:1 **Carburation** 3 x Keihin 26mm flatslides **Ignition** CDI **Primary/final drive** gear/chain **Clutch** Wet multiplate **Gearbox** Six-speed **CHASSIS Frame** Box-section aluminium perimeter **Front suspension** 37mm telescopic Showa forks with anti-dive; adjustable preload and rebound damping **Rear suspension** Pro-Link monoshock, adjustable preload and rebound damping **Brakes** Front: 2 x 256mm discs, two-piston calipers. Rear: 220mm disc, two-piston caliper **Wheels** Pressed aluminium Comstar **Tyres** F: 100/90 x 16. R: 110/90 x 17 **DIMENSIONS Wheelbase** 1394mm (54.9in) **Seat height** 790mm (31.1in) **Fuel capacity** 19 litres (five gallons) **Weight** 163kg (359lb) **PERFORMANCE Power** (claimed) 72bhp at 9500rpm* **Torque** (claimed) 39lb ft at 8500rpm* **Top speed** 126mph **Price in 1985** £2899

‘So light, well balanced and manoeuvrable, it’s in and out of corners before my brain has time to catch up’

to see why – it makes short work of winding back roads and scythes through turns with light-footed ease.

It’s so light, well balanced and manoeuvrable that it’s in and out of corners before my brain has time to catch up. The only limitation is the tyres – the skinny 110/90 x 17 rear would have been too slim for even a 125 by the mid-’90s. Fortunately, however, the Bridgestone BT45s Ian’s had fitted complement the chassis perfectly.

Apart from the NS’s impeccable handling, addictively urgent delivery and surprisingly accommodating ergonomics, what really shines through during my ride is this Honda’s fabulous quality. The intricate aluminium castings, perfectly fitting bodywork, crisply designed controls and GP-spec detailing, all accentuated by Ian’s desire for perfection and Mark’s hands-on genius. A tribute to both Honda’s mid-’80s build quality and what can be achieved by a sensitive restoration and an insistence on fine detail.

This NS400R could so easily have been wrecked by a crude restoration. Thank goodness it found its way to Ian and Mark, whose eyes for quality have breathed new life into a true modern classic. CB

Thanks to

- RJ Motorcycle Locks, Keith Gebbie (KG Transport), Matthew Cribb, Andy Eykelbosch

Honda’s V3 strokers

In the mid-’80s three of the four Japanese manufacturers produced road-going ‘replicas’ of 500GP class two-strokes: Yamaha with its RD500LC (RZV500R), Suzuki’s RG500 Gamma, and Honda with the NS400R. The latter differed from the RD and RG in that it wasn’t a 500 and was a triple rather than a four-cylinder.

In fact, the NS can trace its roots back to Honda’s first two-stroke 250, the MVX (below). Launched in 1983 for the rapidly expanding Japanese sports bike market of the time, the MVX featured a V3 two-stroke motor mounted in a VT250 chassis. Despite its exotic engine and appearance, the MVX was beset by reliability issues and soon disappeared in favour of Honda’s next 250 - the V-Twin NS250R.

The NS400R is a mix of the two - its 387cc engine is a beefed-up, bored-out version of the MVX powerplant, with additional ATAC powervalves on the front two cylinders. The 400’s chassis is borrowed from the NS250R. And being a 400, it perfectly suited Japan’s restrictive licencing laws that made it extremely hard for riders to progress beyond 400cc. What the NS lacked against the RD and RG in size and performance, it more than made up for in handling and quality.

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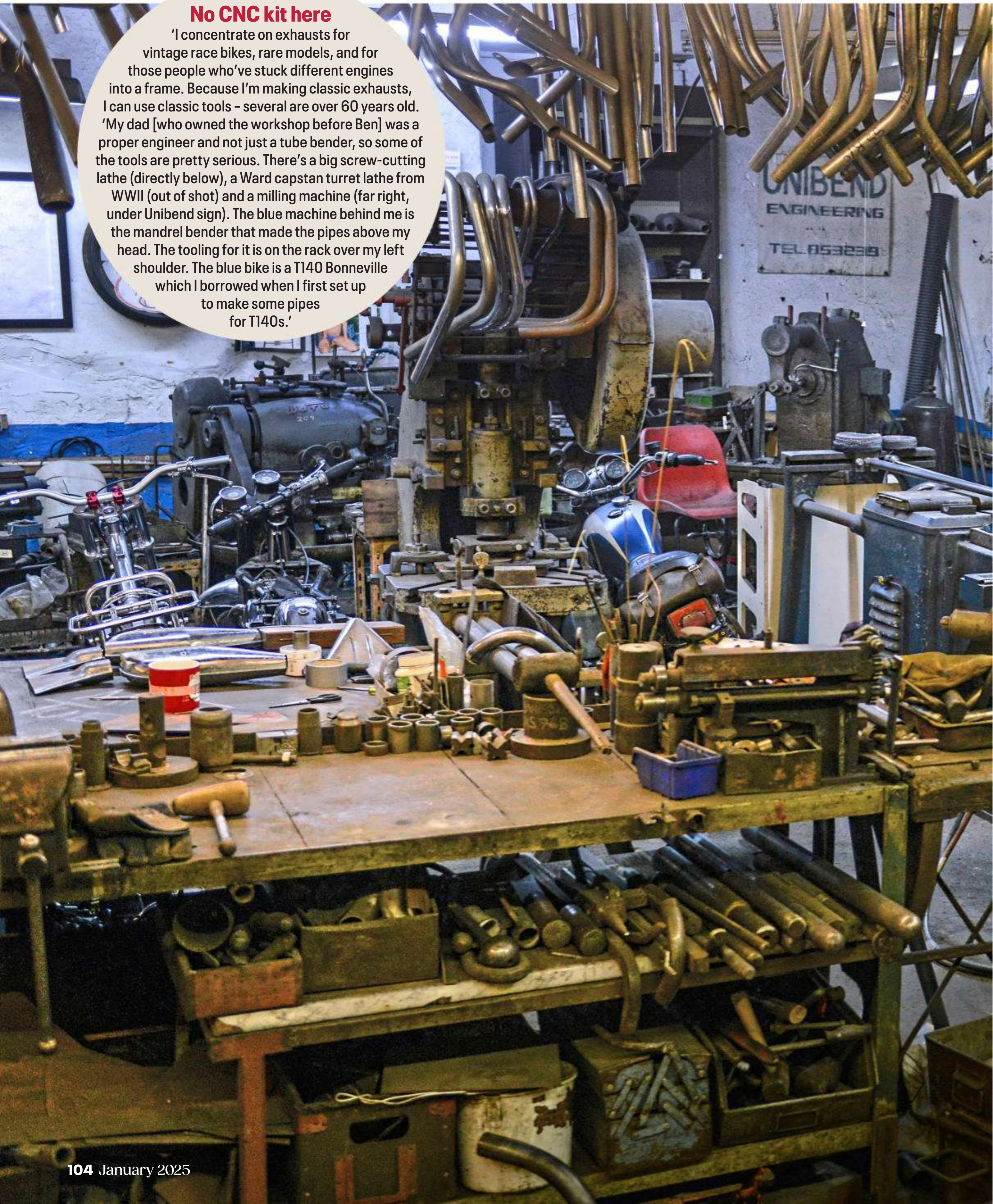

No CNC kit here

'I concentrate on exhausts for vintage race bikes, rare models, and for those people who've stuck different engines into a frame. Because I'm making classic exhausts, I can use classic tools – several are over 60 years old. 'My dad [who owned the workshop before Ben] was a proper engineer and not just a tube bender, so some of the tools are pretty serious. There's a big screw-cutting lathe (directly below), a Ward capstan turret lathe from WWII (out of shot) and a milling machine (far right, under Unibend sign). The blue machine behind me is the mandrel bender that made the pipes above my head. The tooling for it is on the rack over my left shoulder. The blue bike is a T140 Bonneville which I borrowed when I first set up to make some pipes for T140s.'

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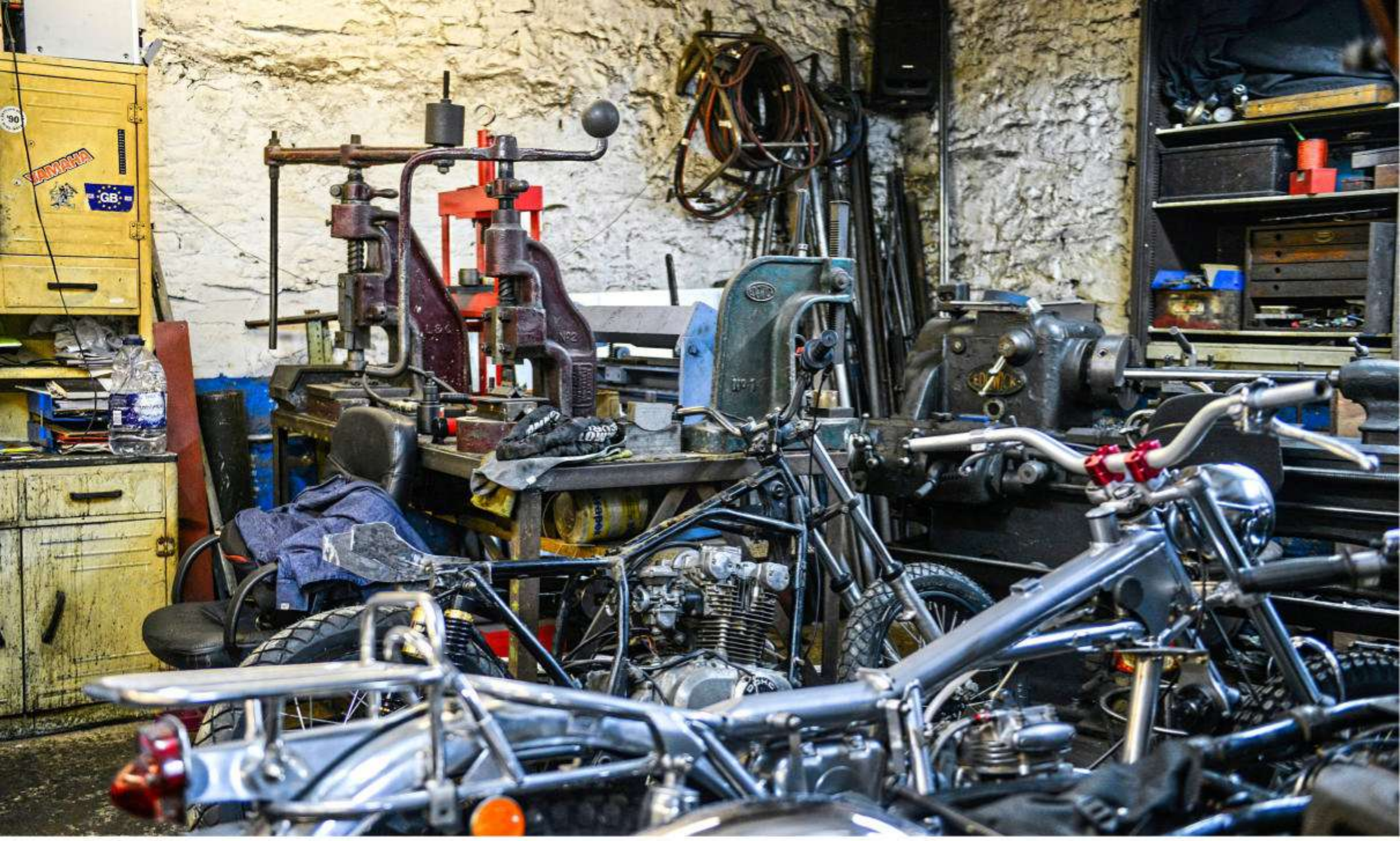
FRESHLY OVERHAULED WORKSHOP SECTION

‘I really like the vintage garage vibe’

Tucked away in a back street of Rochdale is Raysons Exhausts, where **Ben Hardman** continues to bend tubes just like his father and grandfather before him

Photography **GREG MOSS**



Ben Hardman has been making bespoke exhausts for classic bikes since 2011 – but that's only half the story. He learnt his trade from his father and grandfather, so he has tube-bending experience way beyond his 38 years.

"I used to come down here with my dad when I was little and he'd ask me what I wanted to make," says Ben. "I'd root through the scrap and come up with ideas and dad would weld it all up into little cars or whatever."

Tragically, Ben's dad died racing at Scarborough when Ben was 11, so his grandad – an experienced exhaust maker himself – took over the workshop.

> 'I persuaded my grandad to teach me how to make exhausts'

"Then when he retired, my uncle took over and ran it into the ground. After 10 years I found out he was planning to sell everything, so I went round and changed the locks. I wasn't having that.

"I persuaded my grandad to teach me how to make exhausts, and got my other uncles to teach me milling and turning. I started the business in 2011 and called it Raysons – after my dad Ray." CB

More info: raysonsuk.com

Hand-me-down machine tools

▲ 'The bike in the foreground is a B25 BSA. I do loads of this kind of thing, because the owners want to give their road bike more of a dirt look, with a works CCM-style exhaust. I can make one for any BSA single - C15, B25 or B40- because they're all the same motor really. The bike behind that is a Suzuki twin that had been made into a street tracker. At the back are a couple of big fly presses which I use for punching holes, and to the right of them is a box and pan folder [a sheet metal bender] which I got from Bolton Motor College. The green machine is an arbour press which you can use for pressing bearings, but I just use for general pressing - I'm more like a blacksmith than a machinist really.'

Sand bending - sounds easy, but isn't

▲ 'I'm sand bending a pipe here. You heat up the pipe, then press it with your ribs to get the bend you want. I'll take a day of planning, sussing out how I'm going to bend the pipe - actually, for a four, I might spend two days working out how the hell I'm going to route it. I've got flexi-hoses I use to create a pattern, then I fill the pipe up with dry sand and work from eye to bend it, remembering the bits where I know it has to clear something. You're bending in a different plane to the bike, so it's quite difficult to get right. And sometimes despite all the planning it doesn't fit at all, in which case the best thing to do is wreck it - chop it, stretch it, weld it - but wreck it into the right shape and use that as the new pattern.'

Mandrel tooling

'This is all the tooling for the mandrel bending machine. I call them keys, because they come in bunches to do all the bends you need for a particular exhaust – the one you see here is for a T120 with a standard frame. You need to know the frame as well as the engine to make the pipes fit.'

Handling the heat

'That's my main bench, with an engineer's surface block on it. One of my customers gave me that mitt – if you get distracted for a minute and then pick up a pipe you've just bent, you might think it'll be cool, but the sand inside makes sure it's definitely not!'

Historic hammers

'I tidied this up just for *Classic Bike* – it doesn't usually look this neat. I took down the topless posters too. I like the vintage garage vibe. There's a planishing hammer on this board that was my grandad's and I use that every day, but I like to keep all the relics – all the stuff my dad used, but I don't. Really, I could do what I do out the back of a garage, but why would I want that? Realistically, if my dad hadn't died in 1997 he probably would have replaced all the machines with 1980s ones, because they were cheap in the 2000s. The tube bender I use is so old that the same model is in the company's museum in Italy. The chop saw I use has got '1953' written on the back. But they all still work fine, so I'm happy to keep them.'

What my bikes taught me

Ben Hardman's top teachers

1. Manx International

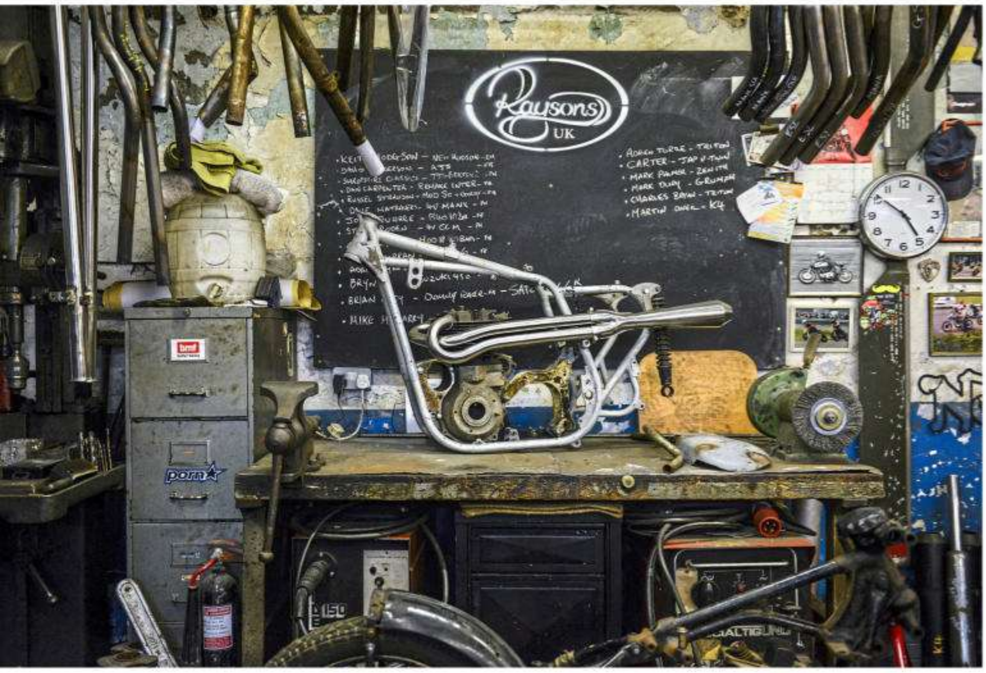
This Norton 'Big Plunger' Manx International taught me that the older bikes can be just as interesting to work on as newer ones. This has a works-style exhaust, and was built to be raced in the Lansdowne series and Goodwood. I love working on Manx Nortons too – my grandad had them.

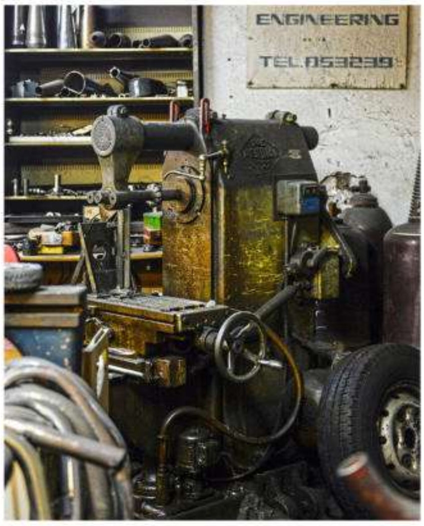
2. BSA B50

This is my dad, Ray Hardman, on his home-built BSA B50 in 1987, the year after I was born. He was sponsored by my grandad's bike shop, Unity Equipe. Dad's racing taught me to love the competition side of motorcycling – and these days I make a lot of exhausts for classic racers.

3. Benelli Six

I've done two of these, and they taught me that I can do complicated stuff. With the first one, I told the owner I needed it to sit there for weeks so I could just look at it and work out how I was going to get six pipes to go into six megaphones (which I had to hydroform to get the curves right).





Who wants a straight line?

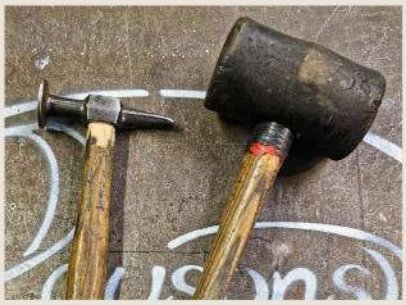
▲ 'That's a BSA A7 on the bench – I borrowed it when I first started, to make patterns. I think I went on to make three sets of these pipes. If you look at the exhausts on something like a modern Triumph Scrambler, you'll see it's a bend then a straight. But the middle bit of the one I've done here is bent slightly to break the line and make it look like a works BSA.'

Classic mill

◀ 'This is a milling machine that my dad used to make slots in folding footpegs. He made thousands of them back in the day. I use it to make swan-neck clip-ons – I still get asked to make a lot of those.'

Useful things

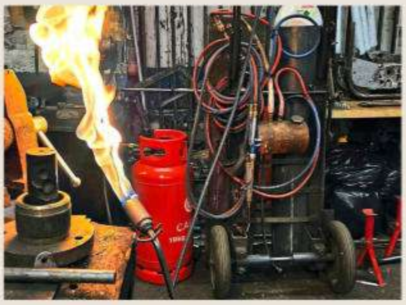
Just some of the essential items in Ben's workshop



Hammers

Cost: £40 **Where?** Tool shops

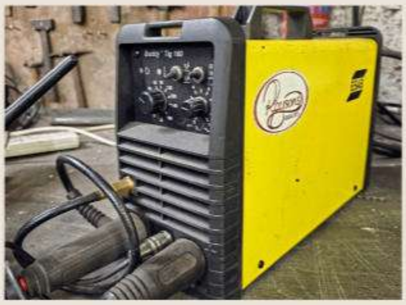
You need good hammers to make exhausts. The planishing hammer was my grandad's and I use it all the time. I've bought replacements for it, but they don't work as well – the head of this one has been polished so much to make it smooth that the head has shrunk. Its balance is lovely.



Blow torch

Cost: £60-100 **Where?** Welding suppliers

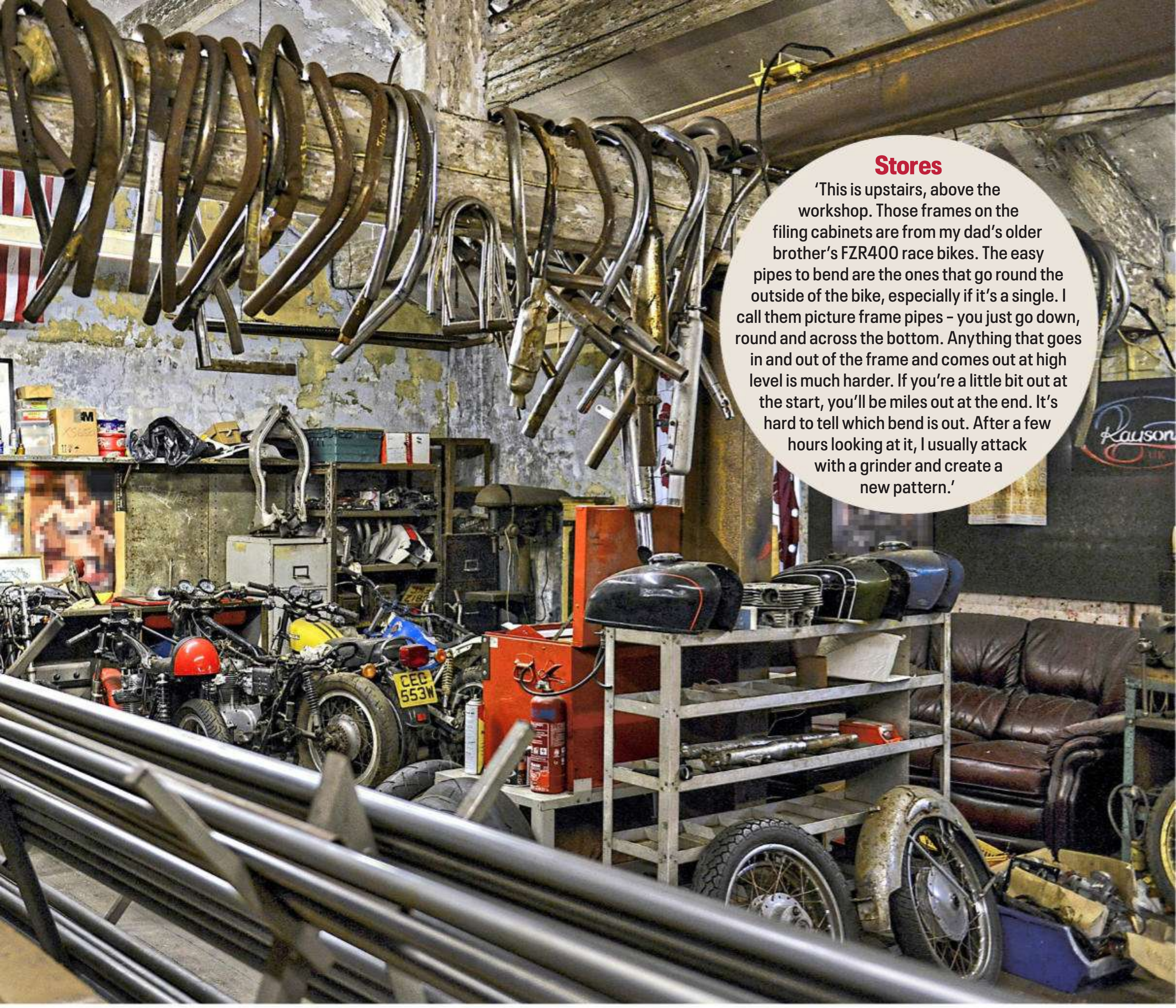
If I had a bag of sand, some tube and a blow torch, I could set up anywhere. When I first started I used a roofing torch, but they make a lot of racket and get through gas. I saw the Yoshimura guys use oxygen and calor gas, so I got this. It's nothing fancy – you can get it from any welding supplier.



Esab Buddy welder

Cost: £475 **Where?** Welding suppliers

I use this little stick welder for tacking bits together all the time. It's a hobby welder really, but it suits me perfectly – you can use it as a TIG welder too. It replaced my dad's old TIG welder, which had broken. That was a massive thing, but this can sit on the bench and does just as good a job.



Stores

'This is upstairs, above the workshop. Those frames on the filing cabinets are from my dad's older brother's FZR400 race bikes. The easy pipes to bend are the ones that go round the outside of the bike, especially if it's a single. I call them picture frame pipes – you just go down, round and across the bottom. Anything that goes in and out of the frame and comes out at high level is much harder. If you're a little bit out at the start, you'll be miles out at the end. It's hard to tell which bend is out. After a few hours looking at it, I usually attack with a grinder and create a new pattern.'

Behold the mighty power press

▲ 'The lathe at the back is a MkI Edgwick, which is a big screw-cutting lathe from the 1920s, though weirdly it's got a metric screw cutter on it. It's quite rough and ready and I just use it for turning things like bosses and boring. I'm not a machinist by any stretch, but I can skim and bore. The machine in the foreground is a power press – the red flywheel spins round and when you press a button the flywheel engages and it throws the press arm down. My grandad used it to cut out four-inch circles that he'd punch holes in and put in the end of megaphones.'

Hydroform planning

▼ 'Those cardboard templates are hydroform patterns for double curved megaphones. You can see there's tape in the middle where I've cut them and altered the angle – if you've got four, they can't be exactly the same because otherwise they don't sit right.'

Recommend a workshop

Know of a workshop we should feature?
Get in touch at **letters@classicbike.co.uk**

Spark plugs

What you need to know

We barely give them a second thought except when they break down, but these mini marvels of steel and ceramic have some clever secrets

Photography **NGK, SIMON BELCHER/ALAMY & SHUTTERSTOCK/DEZAY**

Alan Seeley

'I try to replace spark plugs before they fail, but only use the fancy ones when they were an OE fit. So my 2005 Fireblade gets expensive iridium, but my 1972 Commando gets old-style copper.'

The basics

A spark plug conducts a high-voltage (up to 45,000 volts or more) low-current pulse sent to the plug cap from an ignition coil. This then jumps the air gap from the centre electrode to a side electrode and ground (earth). A conventional side electrode covers the tip of the plug, though some leave the centre electrode more exposed to the fuel/air mixture.

The plug must work within the correct heat range for the engine it is specified for, usually between 400 to 800°C. Plug manufacturers cater for different engine types with a range of spark plugs featuring differing lengths of insulator nose. A long insulator maintains the temperature in the plug – these are called 'hot' or 'soft' plugs and are usually fitted in low-revving, low-performance engines.

A short insulator nose absorbs less heat and with more of the insulator in contact with the shell, heat is rapidly dissipated from the plug. These are termed 'cold' or 'hard' plugs and are usually found in high-revving, high-performance engines.

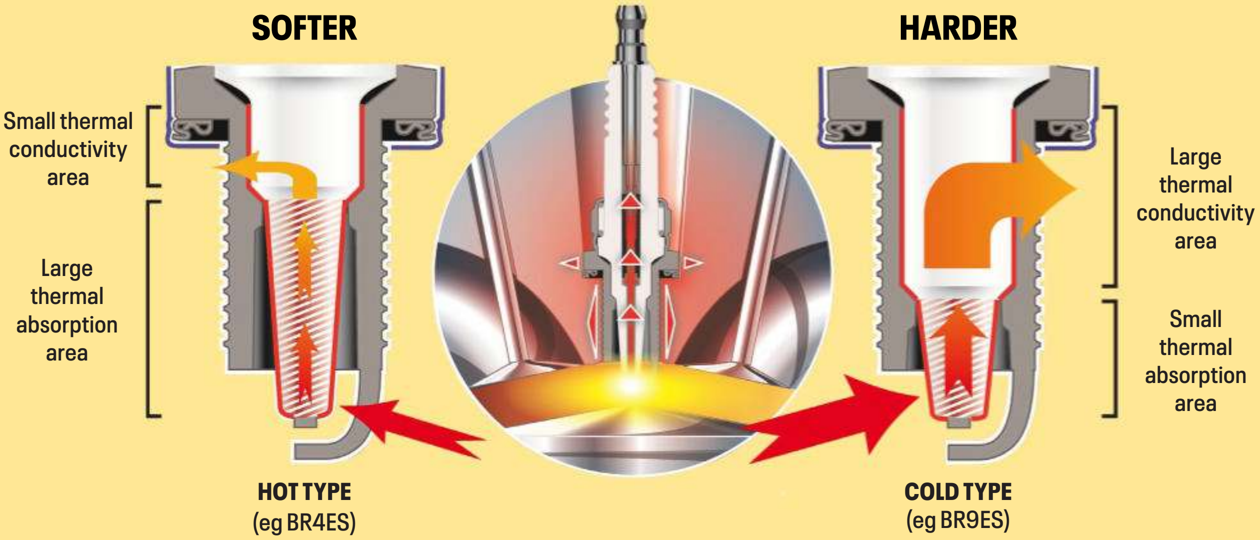
Modern plugs have a wide heat range, so you need good reason to deviate from the recommended fitment, but a slightly hotter plug may reduce fouling if most of your riding is bimbling in town, while a tuned engine may run better with a slightly colder plug.

Modern engines often use projected nose-style plugs in which the electrode and the end of the insulator extend a little further out of the plug. This allows quicker plug heating to reduce fouling, and also takes advantage of the cooling effect of incoming fresh fuel/air at higher revs. Plug manufacturers design their spark plugs for the type of engine your bike has, so this isn't a variable you need be concerned with in plug selection.

So this is what 40,000V looks like up close

Running hot and cold

It might sound counter-intuitive to say that a high-revving, high-performance engine requires a cold spark plug, while a low-revving, low-performance engine requires a hot plug - but it's all about retaining or dissipating the correct amount of heat.



SOFTER
HARDER
Small thermal conductivity area
Large thermal absorption area
Large thermal conductivity area
Small thermal absorption area
HOT TYPE
(eg BR4ES)
COLD TYPE
(eg BR9ES)

What are the options?

COPPER SPARK PLUGS

In a copper spark plug, the central electrode is usually made from a heat and fuel-resistant nickel alloy with a copper core. Copper is a popular choice for plug construction, because it offers good conductivity of electricity plus the ability to dissipate heat. Copper also has the advantage of being cheap, making this type of plug an economical choice.

The more basic the engine, the more basic the plug required. A magneto engine will be happiest with a copper plug without a resistor to match the lower energy of the system.

⊕ **Pros** Cheap and easily available

⊖ **Cons** Less resistant to erosion and not as forgiving of high temperatures

EXOTIC METALS

Higher-end metals such as silver, platinum, palladium and gold are sometimes used in the electrode alloy for their anti-erosion characteristics, or improved conductive properties. For example, gold is more resistant to corrosion and silver conducts better than copper. The iridium you often hear talked of in the context of spark plugs is a member of the platinum group of elements. They promise easier starting, greater efficiency and longer life. However, these benefits are really most tangible when they are used in high-revving, high-compression modern engines.

⊕ **Pros** Longer service life, better guarantee of spark efficiency

⊖ **Cons** Expense

SURFACE DISCHARGE PLUGS

The spark of a surface discharge plug goes sideways from the centre electrode to the side electrode, which can be the metal shell itself. This gives the centre electrode unhindered exposure to the fuel/air mixture and theoretically keeps the electrode cleaner because the spark stops deposits forming on it. It is also intended to slow erosion by giving the spark several paths to earth, therefore keeping the side electrodes cleaner for longer.

These plugs are something of a niche and really only benefit hard-worked modern race engines. Probably not worth the expense for most of us.

⊕ **Pros** Long life and efficiency

⊖ **Cons** Expense, limited range of fitments

Decoding a plug

The specification of a plug is indicated by the code on the insulator. The really important bits are heat range, thread size, reach and the material used in the plug's core.

Typically, an NGK CR9E has a 10mm thread with a 16mm hex (C), a suppressor resistor (R), is 9 on the heat range (from 2 hot to 12 cold) and a reach of 19mm (E), which is the length of the thread. There may also be a letter denoting the firing end construction – for example a BR8ES has a standard copper core (S). This might be also be followed by a number which denotes the required gap in tenths of a millimetre (where there is no number, the gap is 0.7-0.8mm).

Different manufacturers use different codes and Champion's heat range numbers work in the opposite way to NGK; high numbers are hot, low numbers are cool. Your bike shop and the internet have cross-reference charts if you want or need to deviate from the manufacturers OE fitting.

What are typical failures and when should plugs be replaced?

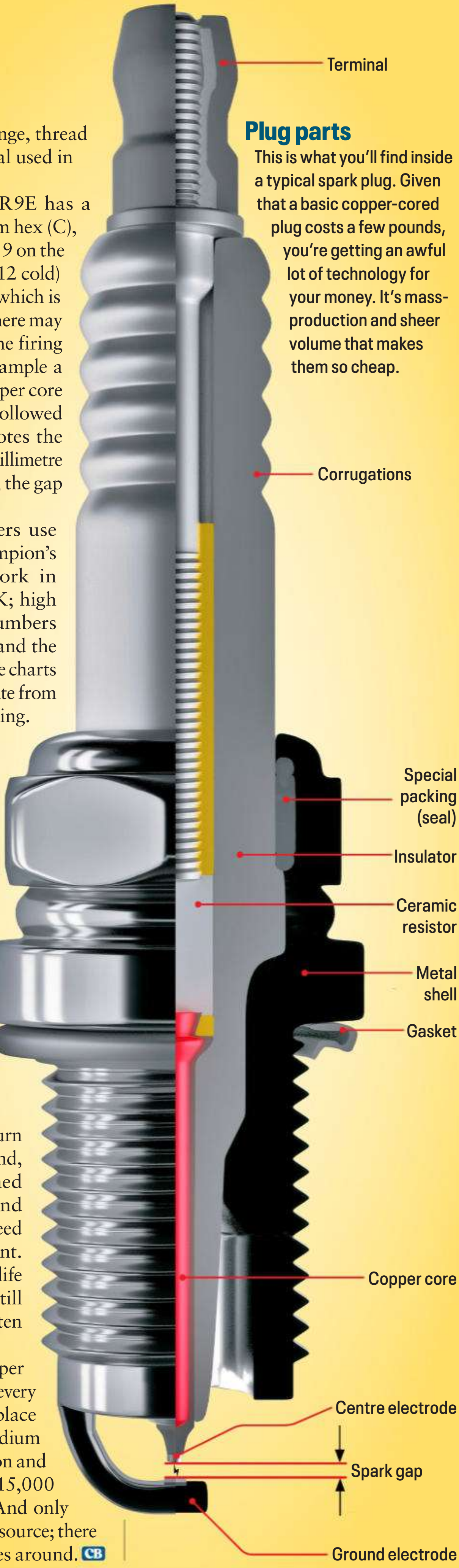
Given that a plug sparks thousands of times every minute, it's not surprising that side and centre electrodes are prone to wear. The combination of extreme heat and vibration can damage insulators – and then there's the constant attack from oil, carbon and combustion byproducts.

Older four-strokes that burn a bit of oil will foul plugs and, while they can be cleaned with a copper brush and brake cleaner, they will need more frequent replacement. Modern oil improves plug life on two-strokes, but they still need replacement more often than four-stroke plugs.

Check conventional copper plugs for gap and condition every 4000-5000 miles and replace at 8000-10,000 miles. Iridium plugs have longer inspection and replacement intervals of 15,000 and 30,000 miles or so. And only buy plugs from a reputable source; there are lots of low-quality fakes around.

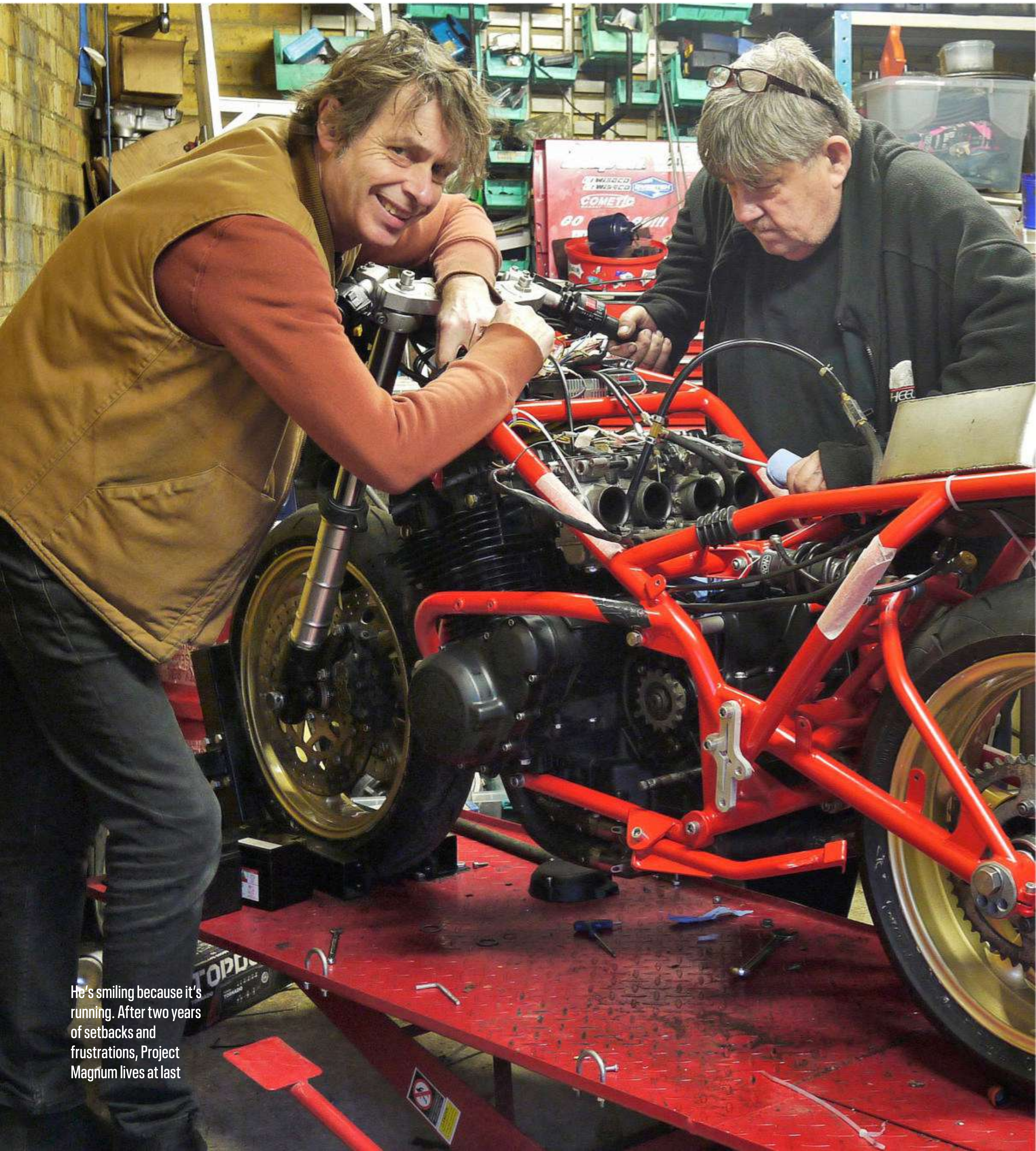
Plug parts

This is what you'll find inside a typical spark plug. Given that a basic copper-cored plug costs a few pounds, you're getting an awful lot of technology for your money. It's mass-production and sheer volume that makes them so cheap.



Sound of success

If only these pages had a volume control, you'd be able to hear the joyous noise of Project Harris Magnum shouting at anyone who cast doubts about its viability



He's smiling because it's running. After two years of setbacks and frustrations, Project Magnum lives at last

Alan Seeley

1984 Harris Magnum 2

Many hundreds of hours have gone into the building of this Suzuki-powered jigsaw.But, at long last, *CB*'s modern classics man and mate Gary were ready for that landmark project moment: the first start-up.

Patience is the most elusive of virtues, but it's a toolbox essential for the specials builder. The wisdom of even embarking on this build has been called into question many times. And as for the money – well, we don't talk about the money, do we? Such is the rollercoaster ride of any build or restoration.

However, perseverance, sheer bloody-mindedness and, in this case, the relentless incentive of magazine deadlines have been enough to keep things moving. Project Magnum may not yet be finished, but it is at the point where it can be fired up.

I'm keen to chuck some fuel in, hang a battery on it and push the starter button. This will answer some nagging questions, not least whether or not the pressed-up crank – the only part of the Suzuki GSX1100 engine not to be thoroughly overhauled – is any good. It felt alright when pulling on the conrods on the bench – but, of course, that is rather different from it spinning at a few thousand rpm under the violence of combustion.

"Patience," counsels my dear friend and air-cooled Suzuki nut and expert, Gary Hurd. He isn't always known for an abundance of forbearance himself, but I know he's right. The big man is always correct in these circumstances.

"There's a few things we need to do before it's fired up."

First among these, obviously, is to pour some oil into the rebuilt engine. It says 3500cc on the cases, but the dry motor with its huge, fresh filter element drinks most of a four-litre bottle before oil appears at the correct level in the inspection window.

Next, he turns the engine over using a socket on the end of the crank, listening and feeling one more time for any unwanted clicks or inhibitions. This had been done when the engine was first completed, but there's no harm in doing it one more time for peace of mind.

Big Gary sets up the Dyna S ignition system

It proved a long wait for the power probe light to go out, confirming that there was oil pressure

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAN SEELEY

Meanwhile, I've connected the battery in its box at the rear, but Gary even has a view on that. "Disconnect the negative terminal and just nip the outer edge of the ring under the bolt," he says. "That way we can just pull the lead off to kill the ignition if things go wrong."

'The crank felt OK on the bench. Now it will feel the violence of combustion...'

That done, Gary checks for voltage to the coils and the feed for the Dyna S ignition using his power probe. No problems there, as you'd expect with a loom built by electrickery expert Ferret. It's the work of a few minutes to statically time the ignition, turning the engine until there's a spark from number four plug laid on top of the engine and rotating the plate so the marks line up.

Prior to rigging up an auxiliary fuel tank, Gary wants to check that the oil pump is working and the pressure is good. The digital clocks aren't wired in yet, so there is no warning light to refer to. No problem; Gary uses the power probe to apply 12v direct to the switch on top of the cases behind the barrels and spins the starter.

We wait and wait for the bulb in the probe to go out, but it remains resolutely lit. Eyebrows are raised across the top

Power probe proves to be a useful toolbox ally once more, checking for current to the ignition

of the bike and optimism momentarily wanes. Gary suspects the switch rather than the pump. The pessimist in me is convinced that it's the latter. Luckily, he conveniently has another couple of big oil-cooled Suzukis in his garage, and is able to borrow a replacement from one of those. Sure enough, a few seconds turning the motor over with a different switch and the light disappears. We have oil pressure.

Time to hang the auxiliary fuel tank on the secondhand Mikuni RS38 flatslides. "They're going to leak a bit, you know. They often do, even from new," he says, with the assurance of a man who has many decades of experience with these carbs. "You will have to overhaul them." He stuffs some blue roll in the space beneath them in anticipation of this happening.

Mikuni RS38s need a couple of leaks sorting out

'Third stab of the button and Project Magnum lives, firing up on four cylinders'

Exhaust sound is more muted than you might think

So now the moment has finally come. I say a silent prayer to the deities of motorcycle building and restoration, while glancing across Gary's workshop to remind myself where the fire extinguisher is located...

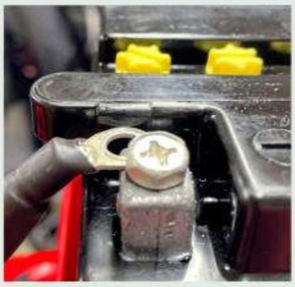
Third stab of the button and at last Project Magnum lives, firing straight up onto four cylinders. The Alldens Exhausts replica Harris can emits its aggressive growl for the very first time. Gary and I grin at another and shake hands across the bike. The engine is crisp and lively, the revs picking up keenly off the throttle. There is no rumble or grumble from the crank. No oil issues from the cases. As predicted, some fuel drips from the bowls of carbs three and four, but we'll take that.

We are pleased and proud to announce the rebirth of a 1984 Harris Magnum 2. It's been a long gestation and an occasionally difficult birth. But here we are. It's almost finished. In so far, of course, as any project is ever finished. Just a little more patience required...

Start-up tips

1 Have you put the oil in – and checked that you've poured in the correct amount? Yes? Good. Turn the engine over statically with a spanner or socket to check all is turning freely and uninhibited.

2 It's a good idea to temporarily attach the battery earth, as shown below, so it can be quickly pulled off in case of an emergency. Make sure you've checked that your fire extinguisheris to hand.



3 Carry out a check for voltage arriving where it should be using a multimeter or power probe. Now it's time to take a static check of ignition timing. Once that's sorted, it's time to fuel up.

4 Rig up the fuel tank. Look out for leaks. We had a couple of minor ones from the carbs when the engine was running, but were able to run the engine for long enough to find that all was good.

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Honda CB750K0	UK bike stunning restoration.	70	£20,000
Kawasaki Z1A	Lovely original bike , Green	75	£19,500
Honda CBX1000Z	Fully rebuilt engine, black	79	£18,750
Suzuki GT750J	Full Resto, Allspeeds, burgundy	72	£14,250
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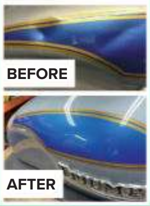

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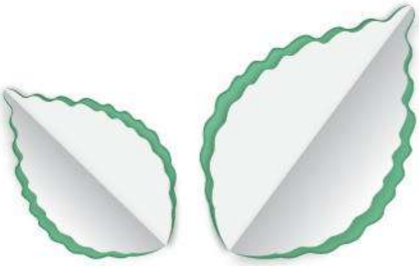

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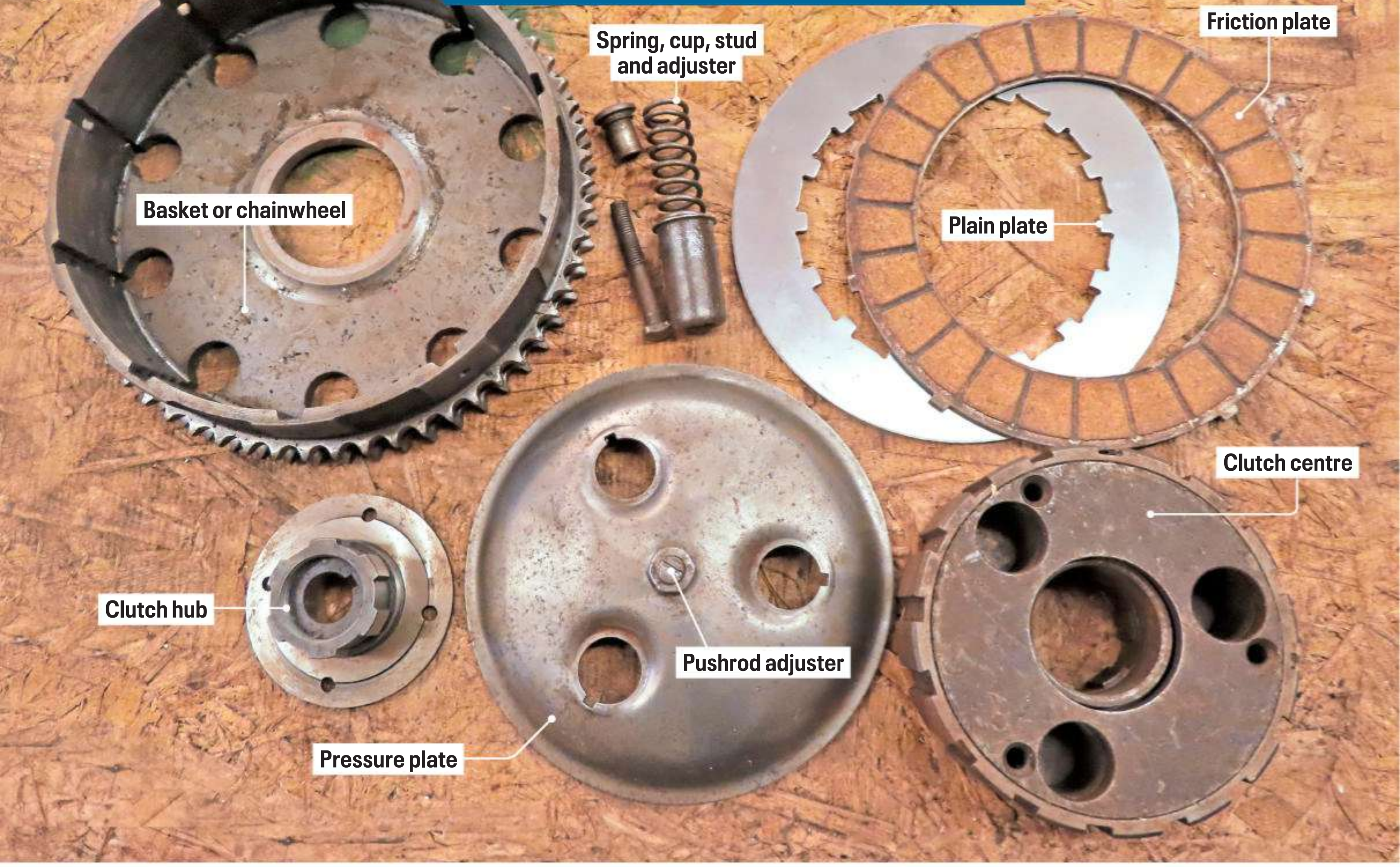


Tips for clutches

You can have the most perfectly rebuilt engine in the world, but you're going nowhere fast unless the power's getting transmitted to the rear wheel properly via this component

Rick Parkington

As far as I'm concerned, few things are more frustrating after getting a bike running really well, than finding you can't enjoy the benefit because the clutch is slipping. Here are a few tips to help get the power down on the tarmac.

Clutch problems can ruin your ride and take two main forms: slip and drag. Slip is like wheelspin; revs build, but speed doesn't. Drag is when the clutch won't free properly, causing difficulty finding neutral, crunchy engagement and the bike creeping forward with the clutch withdrawn. Worse still, you can get both slip and drag at the same time.

British and Japanese clutches differ in that the primary ratio – gearing between engine and 'box – is typically lower on Japanese bikes because they rev higher. That means the clutch is more lightly loaded – and constructed. Secondly, while Japanese spring screws are tightened to a stop, on most British clutches the pressure is adjustable. This allows you to accommodate plate wear – spring pressure reduces as the plates wear thinner – but also to balance spring loading to achieve a completely square lift. The trouble is, get that wrong and you get a very uneven lift and drag or slip – or at worst, both.

Both problems need urgent attention. Drag and slip create excess friction heat that can distort the plates, making the problem worse – especially in stressful traffic situations. Slack suddenly appearing in the cable is the symptom; adjust it up quickly on the cable adjuster – but remember to slacken it off again as the plates cool or you'll get more slip.

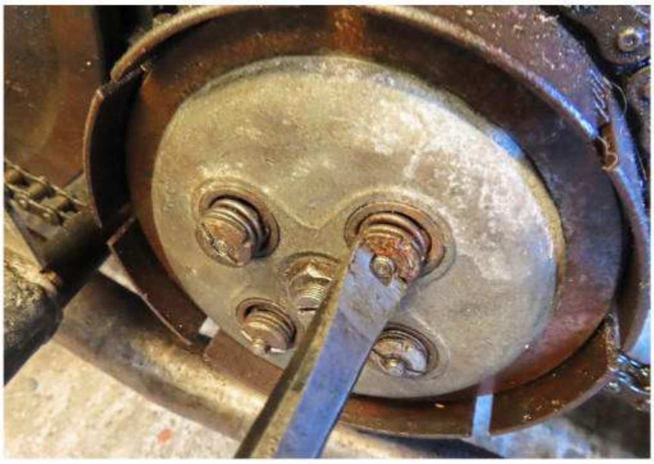
Like Japanese bikes, some British clutches have a shock absorber to smooth power impulses; the difference being that instead of springs in the basket, there are rubber blocks in the clutch centre. These eventually degrade due to the heat and oil, causing free movement that can result in harsh drive – but replacement rubbers are available and cheap.

But don't always blame the clutch. A tight primary chain can lead to difficulty changing gear – and don't overlook the trouble that can be caused by a stiff clutch cable. Thick oil can also cause problems; SAE 20 or similar is OK – it squeezes out from between the plates faster. While any excess is usually flung from the clutch by centrifugal force, if oil 'wet sumps' into the crankcase due to the bike standing for a period, it can overflow into the primary case, filling it to a level where slip is inevitable.

Finally, before starting, pull the clutch lever and kick the engine over to break the stiction on the plates; part of the ritual, it also saves embarrassing grinding noises!

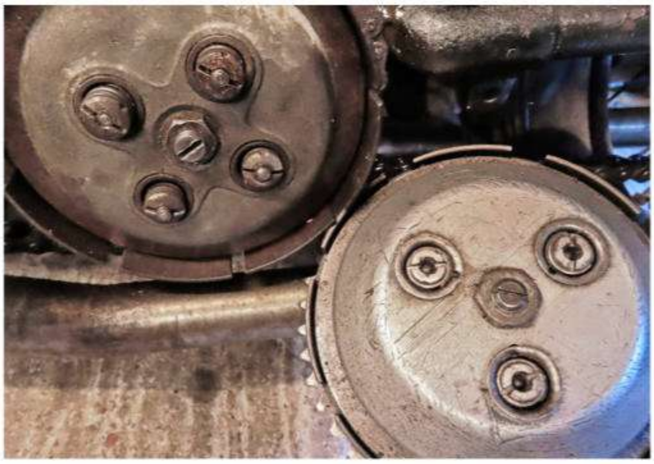
- **Next Month:** Brakes

PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON



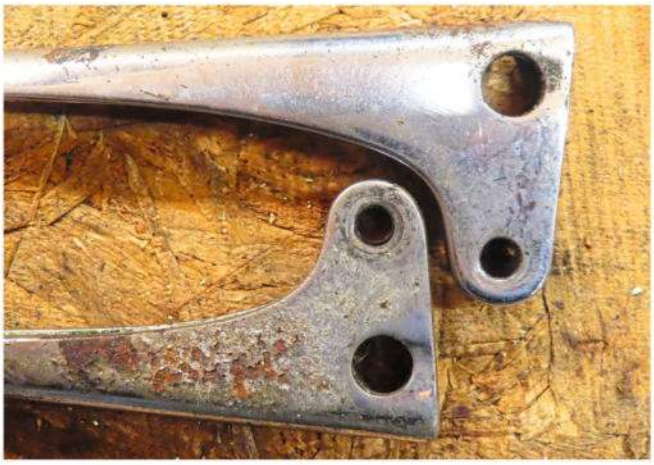
1 Spring adjustment

Having adjusted the springs to a level where the stud end sits just below the slot, lift the clutch and turn the kickstarter. If the outer pressure plate oscillates, adjust the spring tension until it is level, either tightening high spots or slackening low spots. Keep turning over and tweaking the springs until it's as level as possible.



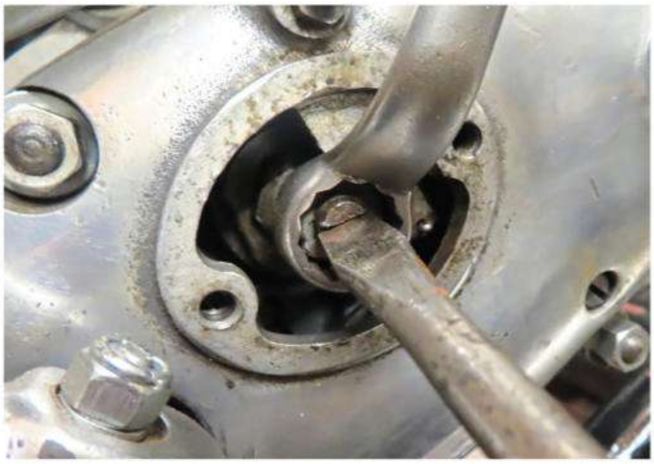
2 How many springs?

Milking stools have three legs so they don't rock on a rough surface; that effect is used to explain why three-spring clutches are better than four, five or six – there's no lazy spring, each one is exerting pressure. But that pressure still needs adjusting for level lift. Nortons used three-spring clutches in the 1930s, Triumph not until the '60s.



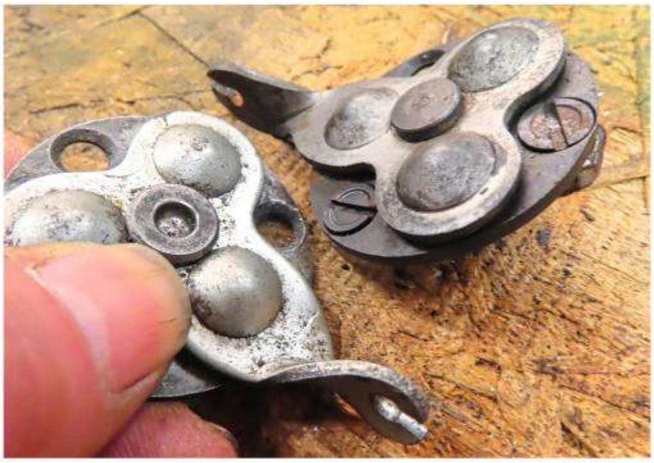
3 Lever radius

There may be an easy way to lighten lever pressure. Levers come in two radii – either $^{7}/_{8}$in or $^{11}/_{8}$in centre to centre, from pivot bolt to cable nipple. Levers with $^{7}/_{8}$in radius offer greater leverage, which makes a big difference – but at the expense of reduced cable travel, which may be a problem on some bikes.



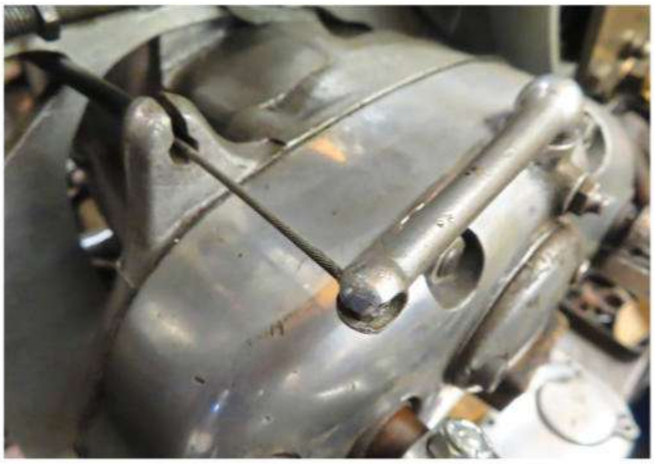
4 Pushrod adjustment

The clutch pushrod must have some free movement to prevent permanent contact and overheating. So, having made sure the clutch operation mechanism is fully retracted, wind in the adjuster till it contacts the pushrod end. Then wind it back a quarter to half a turn, reconnect the cable and adjust for about 3mm lever clearance.



5 Lift check

Triumph three-ball/ramp lifters have limited movement, so make sure the cable is slack enough that they aren't already lifted part way. Two things to watch: if the lift pad is worn with a dimple, it needs replacing; and make sure the countersunk fixing screws have the correct undersize heads – if they sit proud, they may jam operation.



6 Leverage advantage

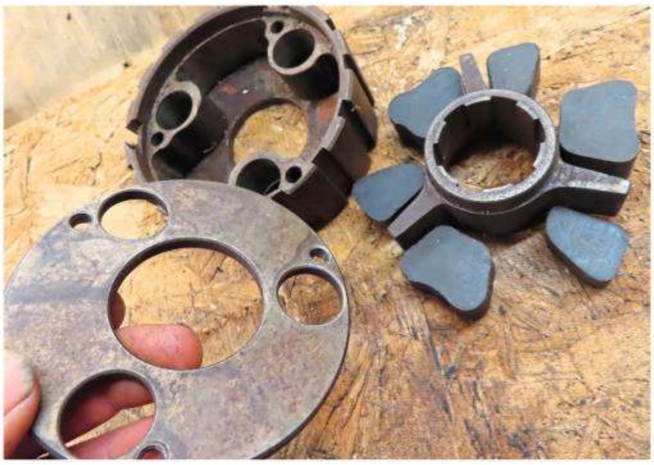
Maximum leverage is always when a lever is at 90° to the cable. That point needs to be reached around mid-lift; check that if you renew the cable. Purpose-made cables rely on the original levers and adjusters being fitted – and because often they are not, it can put the operating lever at the wrong angle.

7 Plate check

Clutch plates don't need to be 'bald' to need replacement; accumulated wear over each one will make the pack thinner, reducing spring preload, so check their thickness. And while plain plates don't usually wear, they can warp due to slip or abuse, causing slip and drag, so check they are flat on a suitable surface.

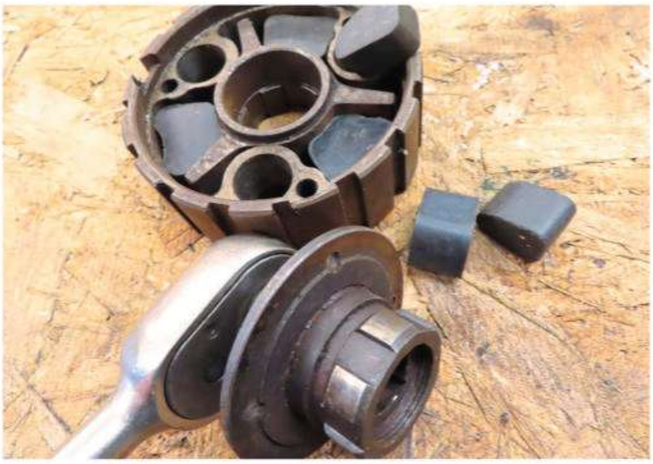
8 Cork plates

Some older plates had replaceable cork inserts. The holes weaken them, so check they're flat too. The trick for fitting cork inserts is to soak the inserts in boiling water beforehand. That makes them pliable enough to squeeze into the holes. If you then soak the reconditioned plates and bolt them in place, they will settle level.



9 Centre rubbers

Some centres contain a shock absorber - a three or four-legged spider whose paddles work against rubbers. Oil and heat cause these to degrade over time, leaving a sticky black substance that gums up the plates and can prevent them from freeing. Check the hardened side plates for wear from the spider.



10 Rubber replacement

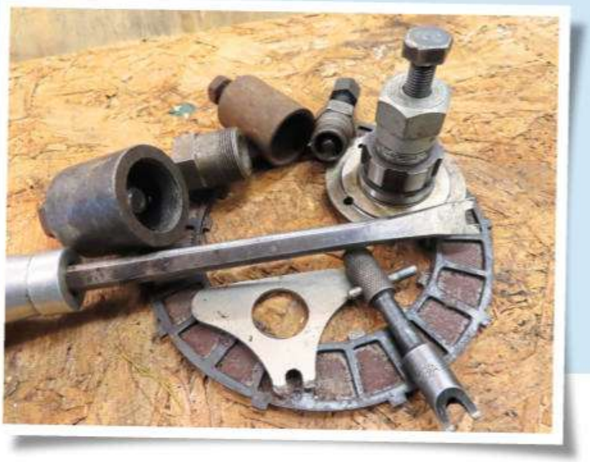
Replacement is a difficult job for home repairers who lack the machine that compressed the large rubbers in the factory, so some people try to use mole grips to do the job. The tool shown above, made by welding a socket to an old clutch hub, allows the spider to be twisted with the clutch centre gripped in a vice.

11 Mix 'n' match

Springs, cups and studs may look similar, but they can vary in length, leading to possible mismatch - a long spring in a short cup will make a heavy clutch. And use correct 57-0394 rollers for Triumph/late BSA clutches - they're not stock ¼ x ¼in rollers, check they're 0.237in (6mm) long or the bearing can seize.

In the toolbox

Clutch pullers are available cheaply for most makes - and worth having. Also needed is a spring adjuster key, although a notch ground in a wide screwdriver works too. Welding an old plain and friction plate together makes a locking tool for undoing the centre nut - and a telescopic magnet will help you to fish the plates out.



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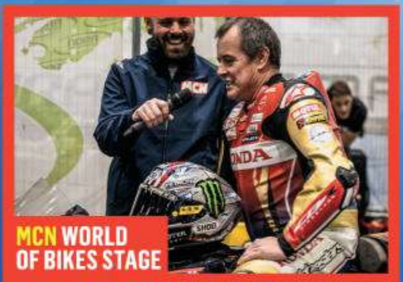
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Don't try this at home

Rick's 1932 Sunbeam was languishing after an accident three years ago. Buying another project bike for spares has inspired a DIY frame-straightening job on the original...

Rick Parkington
1932 Sunbeam Model 9A

We don't all have a 35-ton screw press, but Rick has just such a device in his garden workshop – just the job for a bit of bent tube re-alignment, he reckoned...

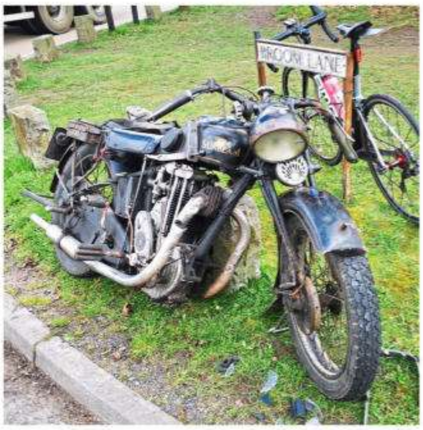
I know what you're thinking: 'This guy's got a problem. Last time he admitted to buying some old banger he didn't need and had no space for – and now he's gone and bought another one!'

Well, you're right; I do have a problem. Three years ago, a Volvo driver suffering from 'lockdown blindness' – a dangerous condition that has outlasted the pandemic itself – swung into a side road without noticing me and my 1932 Sunbeam 9A.

Since my recovery, people often ask if the bike's fixed, forcing me to admit that it isn't. The frame was bent and the front engine mount had torn off the crankcase – but worst of all were the forks. They ended up S-shaped and while I thought they'd straighten, it's touch and go. You can't just pick up another set to replace them. Retubing is an option, but that would be goodbye to the original paint and the harmony of my bike's 90-year-old finish is important to me.

Pondering what to do after purchasing yet another pile of parts inspired straightening the frame on the original bike

WORDS & PHOTOGRAPHY: RICK PARKINGTON


Rick's original Sunbeam after impact. Note S-shaped forks and suspect wheel alignment

Ironically, not long before the accident, I had another original-paint 9A here. It was an unregistered project my mate Raymond was selling – I wish I'd bought it...

Well, now I have. It turned up just as I remembered it on eBay. Incomplete and with no docs, it wasn't attracting much interest; some things are just meant to be.

I'd assumed that I'd take what's needed from this bike to rebuild mine and then sell the leftovers. But that seems a shame – and besides, it'd be easier to cannibalise my bike for bits and build this one. Then I got another idea – borrow what's needed from my bike to put this one together and get it registered, then strip it again and rebuild mine, using parts I might need from this one. That will leave me with my bike plus a part-built one I can complete at my leisure or sell as a project – with a V5. It's all about having options – with luck, I'll get my money back and put both bikes on the road.

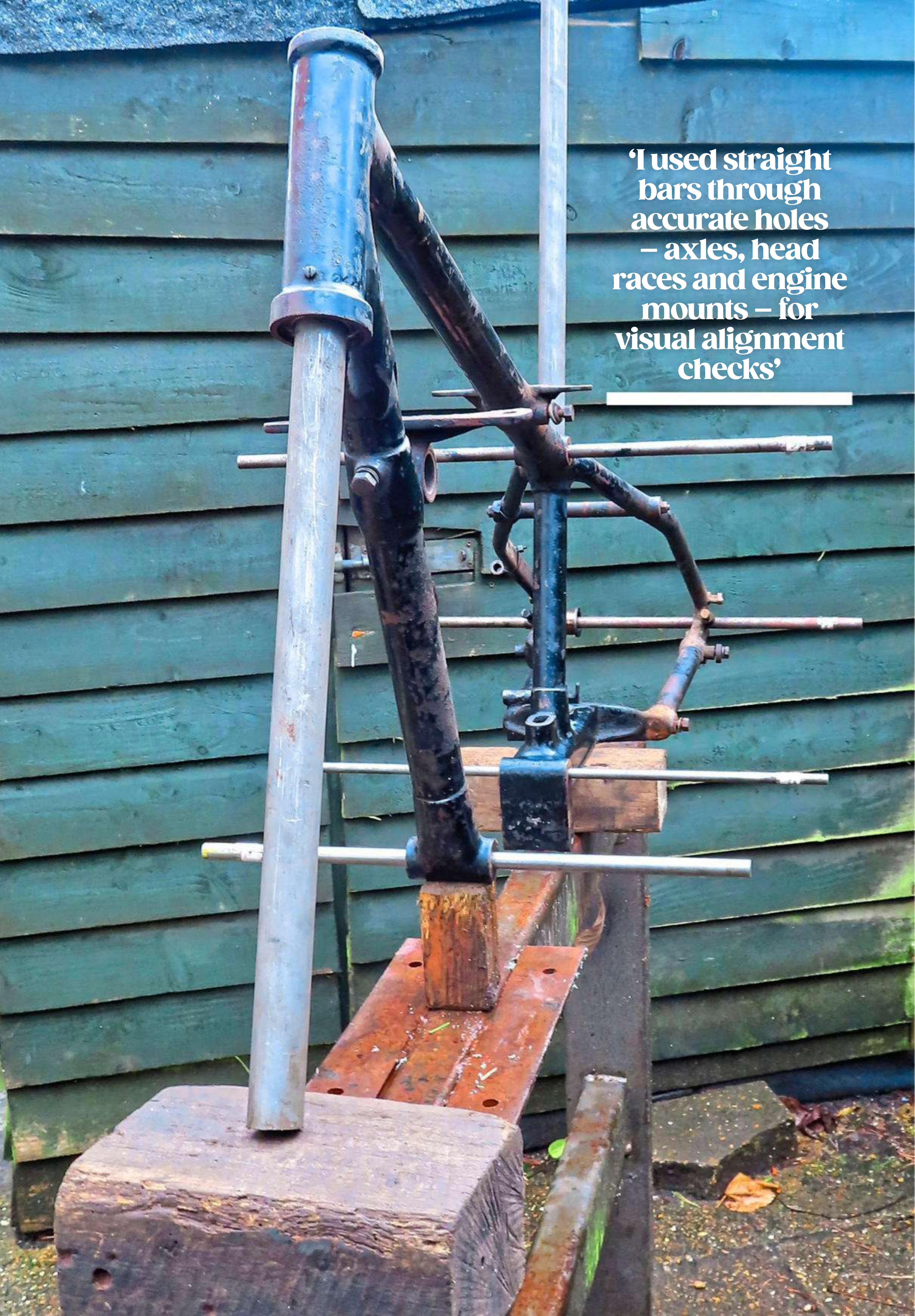
But there's something else – this purchase has got me over the hurdle of starting my rebuild. Having a spare frame and forks has made me more confident about having a go at straightening my frame – as well as giving me something to copy.

Now, obviously I'm not recommending anyone has a go at straightening a frame. I've had frames professionally straightened in the past – but this looks fairly simple, with the damage restricted to one tube.

What enabled the job is my 35-ton screw press. The problem with straightening frames is holding them. Pros use a Motoliner frame jig – a steel cage that secures the frame and provides jacking points from which hydraulic ram pressure forces the tubes straight. With my press, I can either support an individual tube on V-blocks and press it straight or just hold the frame down like a giant vice and set about it with levers. It only works with an open 'diamond' frame like the Sunbeam's, in which the tubes are joined by the engine – you couldn't do a cradle frame this way – and even then, it was more difficult than I expected.

Specialists usually want the engine fitted to keep the engine mounts together while the frame is realigned – any measurements are taken from the Motoliner itself. My method uses the engine mounts as my reference – shifting the tubes till the mounts lined up. I also used straight bars through accurate holes – like axles, head races and engine mounts – for visual alignment checks.

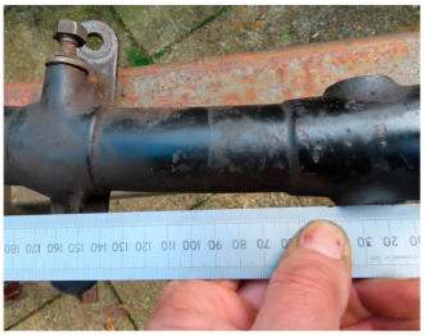
The key thing is that the headstock and rear axle are perpendicular. It looks OK, but it's hard to be sure until the forks and wheels are fitted. At the end of the day, I may still be calling Maidstone Motoliner – but I've enjoyed having a go, and fingers crossed it's worked out...



‘I used straight bars through accurate holes – axles, head races and engine mounts – for visual alignment checks’

How I straightened a frame

Sorting bent girder forks, severed engine mounts and a top tube that was bent sideways

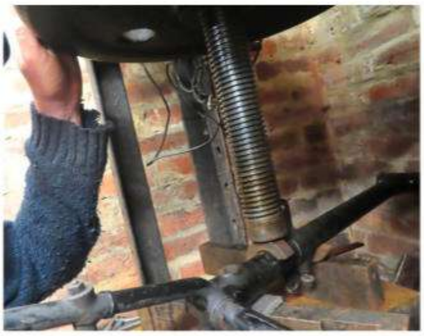


1 Side impact effect

The bend is obvious here, between the saddle tube and the rear tank mount. It's a fairly gentle bend – but 19in away at the other end of the tube, the headstock was miles off to one side.

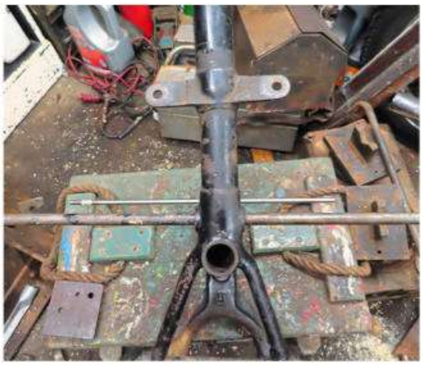
2 Some of it stayed straight

A straight edge placed against the rest of the tube suggested it was straight after that, between the front and rear tank mounts – the sturdy tank providing a brace between the two.



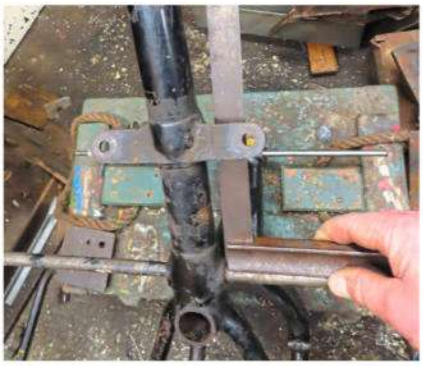
3 Pressing time

Time to start straightening. Supporting the tube at the saddle lug and tank bracket, I pressed the apex of the bend. You should go a bit over, allowing for spring-back – but it's difficult to see, so it took a few goes.



4 Lug check

To check, I wanted to use the sidecar lug under the saddle – it should be drilled square (but never assume). Using straight bars it lines up with the rear engine mount. Good.



5 Squaring up

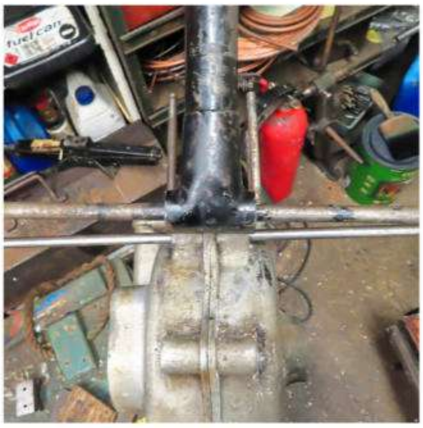
As the lug was perpendicular to the centre line of the frame, I could use a long square on the snug-fitting bar to see if the tube was straight. Check both sides – still a bit to go...

6 Using a bit of leverage

Dammit! I went a bit too far and had to turn it over and lever it back a bit. Luckily, doing it cold, the grain of the metal, 'the 'memory', encourages it to go back where it should be.

7 Not straight yet

But then I noticed another slight bend at the other end of the tube, where it fits into the headstock lug – back in the press to sort that one out then...

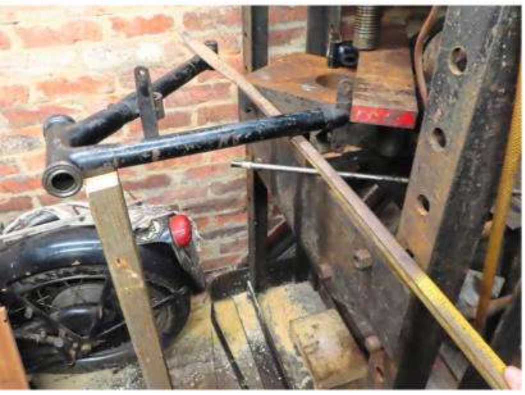


8 Angle in a tangle

Fitting the crankcase, the lug was in the right place but the wrong angle. So the headstock was twisted – but pulling it straight would put the lug off to one side again...

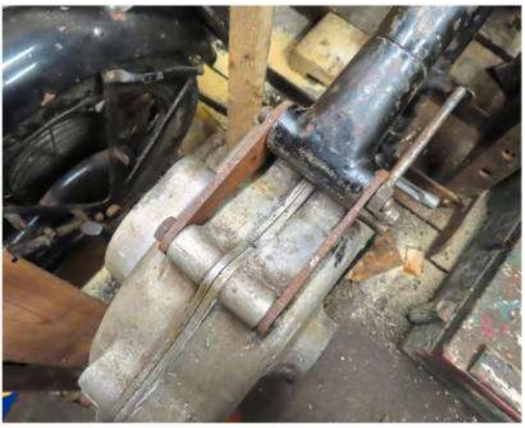
9 Let's twist again

But that's OK, because the top tube still wasn't straight – twisting the top tube and then straightening this bend, I should end up somewhere near the right place... I think.



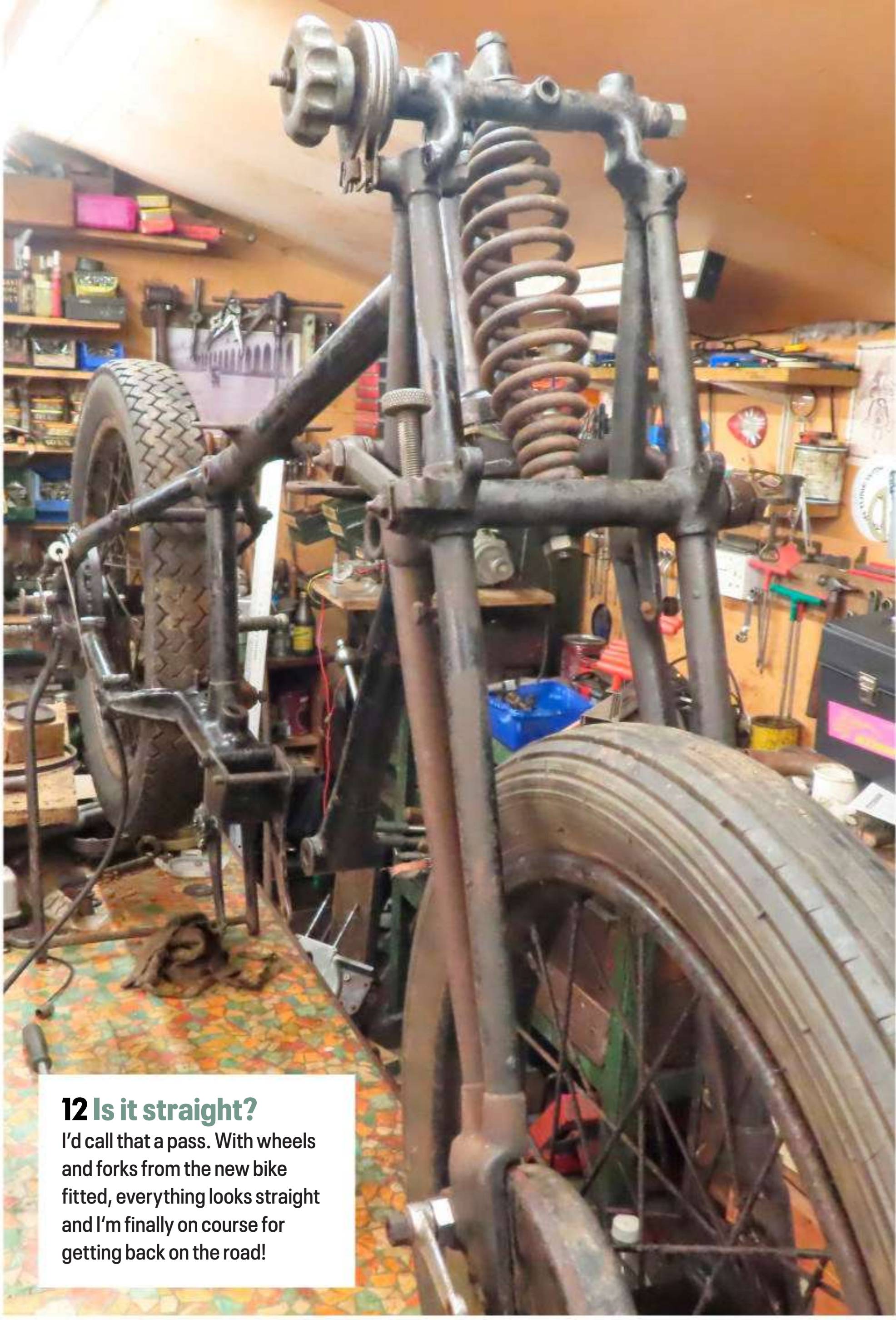
10 Post with the most

I clamped the rear engine and sidecar mounts down to the bed. To avoid simply bending the top tube with my lever, I supported it on a wooden post, thereby forcing it to twist.



11 Jogging the memory

Remarkably, it not only twisted, it straightened the top tube as well putting the engine mount back in line – metal memory again – now for the moment of truth...



12 Is it straight?

I'd call that a pass. With wheels and forks from the new bike fitted, everything looks straight and I'm finally on course for getting back on the road!

In the toolbox

Superior force

My Glasgow-built press exerts 35 tons of force, but can also grip like a vice with enough weight to stay put when I'm levering things, using pry bars, a jemmy or even a car scissor jack.

Get a grip

Useful bits to clamp or support tubes in the press include V-blocks, handlebar clamps and even hard nylon pipe mountings – anything that won't crease or dig into the tube.

Check it out

Straight bars enable checks for parallels and a straight edge highlights location of bends. A spirit level and square are useful too, while calipers reveal how much movement you achieve.

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Care for carburettors

Often cursed at and their needs much underestimated, Alan Seeley argues that carburettors just need a little care and consideration. The tips below should keep your relationship balanced, harmonious and suitably fuelled

Alan Seeley

'I've lost count of the carbs I've cleaned and refurbished. The numbers soon rack up – especially with banks of four.'

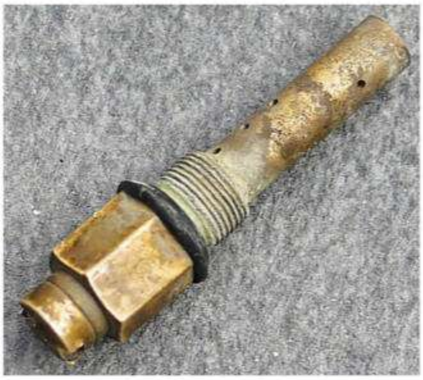
PHOTOGRAPHY: ALAN SEELEY & BAUER AUTOMOTIVE

1 The clean up

The easy availability of cheap ultrasonic cleaners has made carb overhaul quicker and easier. But don't go dipping a bank of carbs in the largest ultrasonic bath you can find, as shown above – because it won't do the job properly. Banks of carbs should be fully dismantled; likewise individual carbs. Afterwards, airways should be blown through with carb cleaner. Nylon fishing line can be carefully poked into drillings and airways to help clear them out.

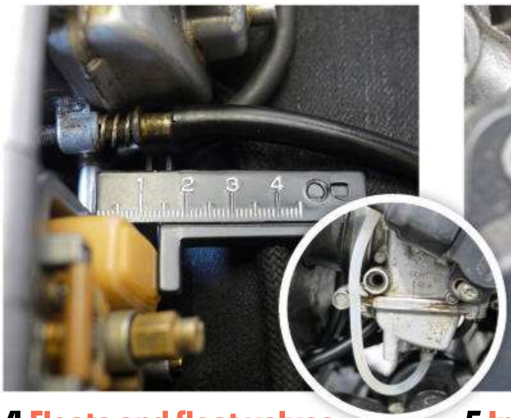
2 CV diaphragms

A simple test for CV diaphragms before you dismantle the carbs is to flick the slides up with a finger. You should feel a slight vacuum as you push the slides up and they should all return at the same rate. Perished or holed diaphragms will allow the slides to go up too easily with an erratic return. Sometimes diaphragms will have been incorrectly fitted or may be escaping their locating slots. Basically, OE or OE equivalent are the only worthwhile replacements.



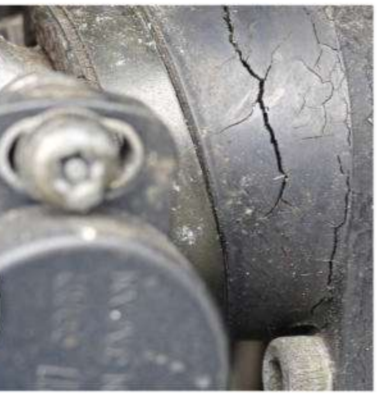
3 Jets, needles, etc

Here we see a manky old emulsion tube with the main jet still fitted. The O-ring must be replaced. If tubes/jets have worn oval they will require replacement – as will worn needles. Again, be wary of cheap internet offerings – it is common for these to bear the same numbers, while actually being completely the wrong size. Always check with a dealer or specialist for OE parts availability. The prices might not be as scary as you expect.



4 Floats and float valves

A leaky float will require replacement. When replacing float needles, these must be matched to the seats. Pattern needles on OE seats won't go; replace as a set. If using the original float seats, don't forget to replace the O-rings behind them. Use a gauge to set float height – one home-made from an old bank card or similar will suffice. On refitting, you can double-check the fuel level using clear tubing as a standpipe.



5 Inlet rubbers

There is no point in reinstalling overhauled carbs into leaky inlet rubbers. External cracks will not necessarily have gone all the way through, however. A simple test for the integrity of carb rubbers is to spray carb or brake cleaner at them while the bike is idling. If the revs rise, it means that the cleaner is being sucked through the cracks and the rubbers need renewing. Replace with OE or an OE equivalent brand such as Tourmax.

In the toolbox

Essential tools

Carb cleaner, blue roll or rag, screwdriver(s), socket(s)

Nice to have

Ultrasonic cleaner – but remember these are not the panacea they are often presumed to be

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Service with a smile

Rupert's freshly-restored Beeza was well and truly run-in through autumn. Time to give it a good checkover and assess what bits are still working well and what needs attention...

Photography **LAURA DYER, RUPERT PAUL** Illustration **RUPERT PAUL**

Rupert Paul
1971 BSA A65 Thunderbolt

The saga of Rupert's BSA resto was covered in *CB* in 2024. The non-running US import's motor and chassis were rebuilt, aiming for a stylish, useable motorcycle.

After 750 miles on my BSA, I've got the winter to sort out the inevitable teething issues. Well, in fact, the problems that have emerged are inherent to the bike's wretched design and conception. As it was a last-gasp model built by a company with clueless leaders and no money, it's hardly a surprise. So, what worked well on my bike and what didn't?

Good news first. Thanks to the liberal use of nylocs or split washers, the famous Brit twin vibration has failed to dislodge a single screw or nut anywhere on the bike. Not one. What has unscrewed, repeatedly, despite the use of thread lock, is the ignition switch in the left-side panel. Tightening it is a bloody nuisance, because you can't get the side panel off without a whole heap of faff – and with it on, you can't grip the slim threaded ring on the back of the lock barrel. The best solution so far is to use two specially-machined fibre washers, one either side of the panel. Fifty miles and counting! We shall see...

The clutch is another pleasant surprise. It's a CNC-machined basket and steel plates from Draganfly, with their 79 gramme aluminium friction plates. The action is light, smooth and flawlessly effective. Good news too, from the £26 drive chain. It hasn't needed adjusting once.

But I reserve my biggest gasp of amazement for the engine. If you can ignore that horrendous vibration above 4000, it goes really well. Towards the end of the year I took the bike to Deenethorpe airfield near Oundle, set up a GPS app,

Expanding rubber bung: part of tank-fixing solution

and razzed it as hard as I dared. Strictly speaking, the motor needed another 250 miles of running in, but as my engine builder Rupe Farnsworth was alongside me on his 1971 A65 Lightning, I threw caution to the wind. Result: a true 87mph for both of us. Rupe's motor has never been apart, and was puffing a bit. Mine was shaking like Cape Canaveral, but there was more speed to come. I just couldn't bring myself to push it any harder. If you've spent £7400 and hundreds of hours on an old bike, you'll know the feeling.

Now the disappointments, none of which were expected.

- 1 The noisiest problem is the fuel tank. Specifically, the way it is fixed to the bike. There's a central mounting tube in the tank, with a rubber bung that fits inside the tube on an upward-facing bolt. The idea is you tighten the nut above the bung, which expands sideways, gripping the tank.

Except it doesn't grip very hard. My tank rattles and clatters over bumps. OK, my tank is using a pattern rubber bung, and the pattern spacer and distance piece can be adjusted to persuade it to expand a bit more, or to sit a bit higher in the central mounting tube. But the Lightning has a positive tank retainer as well, and I think the T-bolt could use the same idea.

I've found a 75mm M8 bolt that fits into the slot in the top tube (stock bolt is a 56mm [2¼in] UNF). I'm using the extra bolt length to take an acetal retainer machined on the lathe. Acetal is a bit like nylon, so it should be kinder to the painted surface of the tank than aluminium or steel. I'm hoping a positive fixing will stop the tank leaping about, while fine tuning the spacer and distance piece will persuade the rubber bung to do its job.

- 2 Night vision. Like many people these days, I've gone for an LED headlight bulb from Goffy Electrical, who sell good quality ones in fitments for most old Brits. It's certainly bright – and I can live with the slightly odd relationship between low and high beam, because it's way better coming back from the pub at night than Rupe F's standard tungsten bulb.

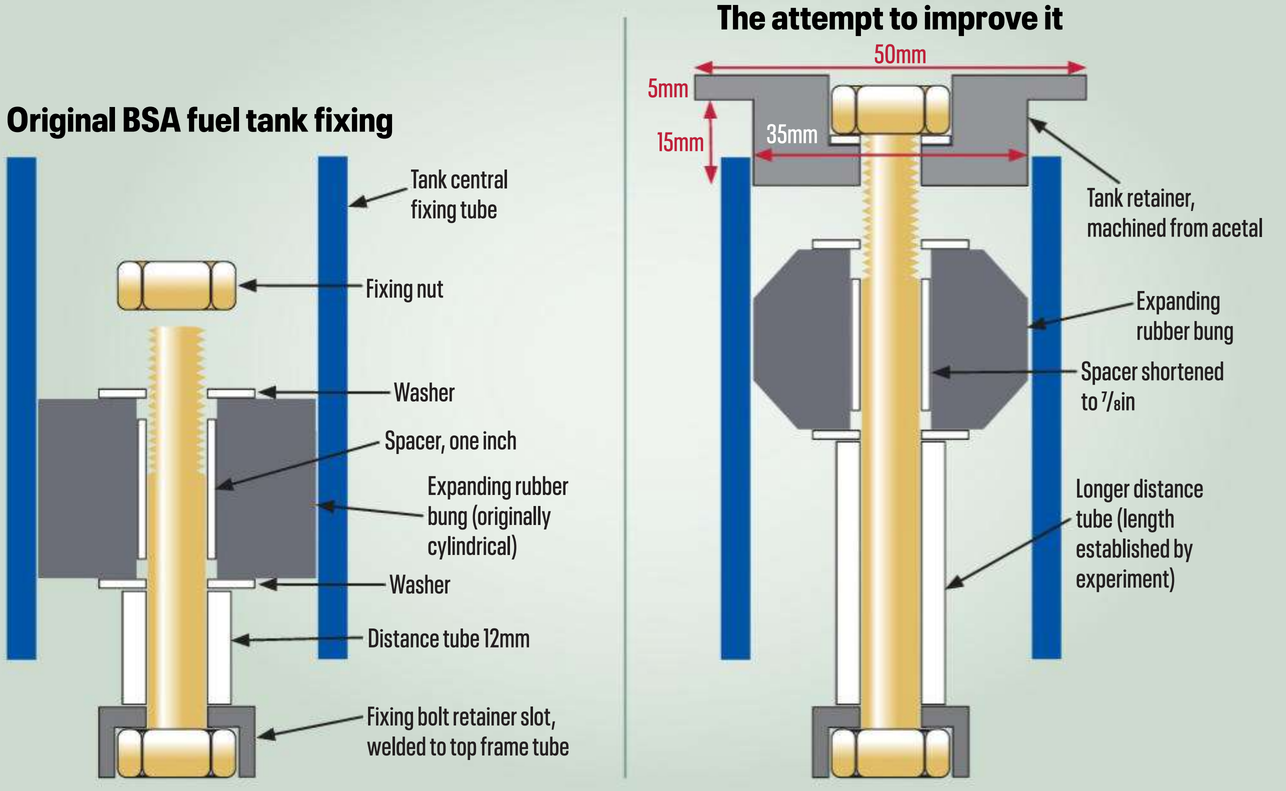
The issue is the high-beam warning light.

Acetal retainer was specially machined on a lathe

For reasons I don't entirely understand, you can't run a conventional warning bulb with the LED headlight because the warning light stays on all the time. So Goffy sells a special LED warning light that cures the issue. (Out of curiosity, I hooked up a diode to the stock warning light to see if that worked as well – it didn't, in either direction.) The only snag is, the warning light is dazzlingly bright. My plan is to add a resistor to the feed wire. A bit of online research suggests a good place to start is 200 ohms.

- 3 The forks are rubbish. I aligned the yokes to ensure the stanchions are parallel, and tweaked the non-standard mudguard to ensure its bracket isn't pulling the forks out of true. I've built them carefully, using

Will Rupert's rattly fuel tank solution work?


Original BSA fuel tank fixing
Tank central fixing tube
Fixing nut
Washer
Spacer, one inch
Expanding rubber bung (originally cylindrical)
Washer
Distance tube 12mm
Fixing bolt retainer slot, welded to top frame tube
The attempt to improve it
50mm
5mm
15mm
35mm
Tank retainer, machined from acetal
Expanding rubber bung
Spacer shortened to 7/8in
Longer distance tube (length established by experiment)

Apart from the tank-securing mods, Rupert plans remedial work on the forks and headlight warning light. But generally it's all going OK

Silkolene 7.5W fluid. They started leaking immediately, and carried on after another rebuild with fresh seals. The leaks aren't just from the usual place. The fork tops, which (rather pathetically) also mount the speedo and tacho, can't seal properly, so the oil walks up the threads and blows back onto the fuel tank.

Just as bad is the fact that the forks are riddled with static friction. You can measure this quite easily, with a cable tie round the fork leg. Pull the forks to full extension and allow them to settle. Measure the distance from the tie to the top of the slider. Next, push down and let them settle. Make sure the cable tie hasn't been moved. Measure the distance again. On a decent Japanese bike, the difference is 3-4mm. On my BSA, it's 16mm.

There are a bunch of reasons for this:

- Pattern stanchions look good – but compared with OE, the chrome finish is rough. There are a few manufacturers, but they all have a similar finish.
- You can only buy seals for about 12 or 15 quid. When I did a fork maintenance course at Reactive Suspension, the tutor Gareth Evans used his shock dyno to compare the friction generated by high quality and cheap seals. Cheapies make something like five times the drag of £60 Showa or £45 SKF seals. I've searched and searched for SKF ones in the right dimensions, but they don't exist.
- The piston ring on the BSA damper rod is an O-ring. It slides up and down inside a pattern stanchion whose internal finish is as rough as a bear's arse. Japanese bikes use nylon or teflon rings.
- The stanchion bears directly on the aluminium casting of the slider. So normal wear makes the action baggier and baggier. Japanese forks from the 1980s often have replaceable bushes to get round this.

I've considered the problem from several angles and taken an awful lot of advice from Gareth and from *CB* readers. If I were rich, I'd unbolt the entire front end and replace it with a Japanese 35mm fork set-up. I'd need an eight-inch steering stem, about 40mm of offset, and a 765mm extended fork length. This would also allow me the heaven of a disc brake; ancient crash injuries are playing havoc with my 62-year-old wrist; the reduced lever effort (and better control) would also be welcome. I could also ditch BSA's rev-counter drive, which has mysteriously broken two drive spindles so far, and whose cable chafes infuriatingly against the offside downpipe. (The rev counter has worked for about two miles out of the 750.)

The trouble with this approach is a) it changes the look of the bike, and b) would cost a bomb, with a new 19in wheel build, much machining, revised fork internals, a new headlight, new switchgear and new clocks.

Instead, I've bought some 35mm bushes and checked that my local engineer, Steve Baker at Q Prep, can machine the sliders out to suit. He's got a 15in Colchester lathe with a four-jaw chuck, and he knows how to drive it. It's been done before, as a few Trident racers have shown in various forums. The bushes I've got are MB3530DU, described as a wrapped PTFE lined plain bearing: £9.88 including post.

CB reader Andy Wimpenny has also pointed me to some teflon piston rings on eBay. He's got a T140, but it's the same deal. "I bought four washers – 1.5mm thick, OD 28mm, ID 24mm. Two rings in each damper rod, cut at 45° to split and fit over the damper rod head." The cost is negligible. Thank you, Andy.

And I can either find some NOS stanchions or keep the ones I've got and lightly cross-hatch the chrome plating on the lathe with 600-grit wet and dry. Gareth does this on many of his fork builds; the oil fills up the micro-scratches to reduce wear and friction. Andy Wimpenny also went for emulators to improve the damping action, which I may end up doing too. Right now I'd settle for less friction and some oil tightness.

Oddly, the things I thought I'd hate – the Amal carb and its insane choke mechanism – have been fine. I'm not even too bothered about the oil leaks. Generally the engine is fairly oil tight – but after the 87mph run, the timing side got a little slimy. Oh well. I'm happy to clean the motor every now and then.

Once the good weather is here, I'll report on how the fork mods have worked. CB

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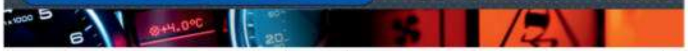

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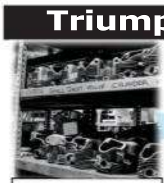

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1959, From 1959, running well and with correct accessories, once bought I may be able to deliver for up to 100 miles from IP264PQ, price ono. £3450Norfolk, tel:01366728030

BMW R80
1978, 8500 Ex-Police bike with Cafe Racer mods, all main engine, transmission and electrical service parts replaced, currently SORN, tax and MoT exempt thanks to classic status. £3200East Sussex, tel:07440499909

BSA A10
1959, 4479 BSA Super Rocket 1959 with 3 owners. Original log book and registration number. Full nut and bolt rebuild. £7800 or possible part exchange with Volvo XC70 Estate car. £7800Derbyshire, tel:07500443619

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BSA BANTAM
1963, 199 Villiers engine, running order, please call for more information. £2600Bridlington, tel:07816561852

BETA BIANCHI
1973, 5555 miles, In pristine condition, fully rebuilt to a very high standard, very fast unrestricted moped, comes with V5C, ready to ride, first to veiw will buy. £1395Lancashire, tel:07908623649

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BSA A10
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1955, Presented in Gold Star Trim with Gold tank, silencer, brakes, Hagon chrome shocks, Akront alloys, new rear tyre, battery, dating certificate, photos, V5C, sold as a project with free delivery. £4450Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

BSA C15
1964, BSA C15 Trials ready to use. £3250Sedgefield, tel: 07816561852

BMW R65
1982, Good condition cosmetically and mechanically. Considerable work carried out by previous owners with receipts available. Little used by myself, ONO. £2500Fife, tel:07305694939

BSA 650
1969, 950 Has matching numbers, has done 9,500 miles since a full engine rebuild by SRM and new stainless rims and tyres, VGC. £5500Uk, tel:01766770648

BSA A65
1965, Classic, TT history, ex Hugh Evans bike, ex work tank, modified brake, electronic ignition. £4750Ireland , tel: 00353871259745

BSA B44
1968, With matching numbers and full engine rebuild just completed, receipts for £2600+, brand new tyres, accident (not on the bike) forces reluctant sale, good overall condition for age, tax/MoT exempt. £5250Surrey, tel: 07710596501

BSA GOLDEN FLASH
1958, Well presented, metallic Gold, 650cc, twin, new tyres, exhausts, silencers, battery, V5C, photos available, stunning classic, free delivery. £5950Scarborough, tel:01723372219

BMW R65
1982, 5300 Good condition, private sale, owned 9 years, original fairing included, little use, good service history, BMW panniers, stainless silencers, exhaust pipes replaced. £2650North Devon, tel:07774190359

BSA A10
1959, Super Rocket, Red/Black, chrome headlamp, guards, twin clocks, Avon tyres, stainless rack, V5C, from private collection, superb bike, free delivery arranged. £6950Yorkshire, tel:01723372219

BSA A7
1956, Metallic Green with Dark Green frame, many receipts from previous restoration, including engine rebuild, new exhausts, silencers, rear tyre, battery, photos, V5C available, free delivery. £3950Scarborough, tel: 01723372219

BSA B44
1958, Metallic Grey, Akront alloys, Avon tyres, new battery, well presented, genuine bike, running well, V5C, photos available, free delivery arranged. £0Scarborough, tel:01723372219

BSA GOLDSTAR
1955, 100 US race bike, DB34 matching numbers, with history, now UK registered with a V5 in my name, used on the road for last 4 years since importing/registering, GSOC registered. £11000Somerset, tel:07960812688

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BSA VICTOR
1967, Everything totally rebuilt including the engine. Stunning bike. No timewasters. £4250Hook,Hants, tel: 07501084121

BULTACO SHERPA
1976, New tyres, tank and panels, Hagon shocks, workshop manual, good fork sliders, seat and rims etc, matching numbers, £1900. £1900West Sussex, tel: 01243378454

COTTON 250
1963, 1965 Villiers Starmaker engine, Roadholder forks, Electrixworld electronic ignition system. £3500Nuneaton, tel: 07918531234

DNEPR MT11
1990, 550 Combination bike for sale, 5500 miles and currently in use, gets lots of attention wherever it goes. £3750Staffs, tel:07940484736

DUCATI 350
1979, 1650 Starts, runs and handles really well, serviced and will have fresh oil, many parts renewed, historic vehicle so no tax/MoT, Hagon rear shocks, some spares are also available. £3500Essex, tel:07929361977

DUCATI 350
1973, Nice little runner, rewired, new battery, new Akront alloy rims, original paint, good condition, Chrome good, no rust, ready to ride. £5000East Sussex, tel:07713601300

DUCATI MARK 3
1968, 4071 miles, In need of full restoration, runs and rides, video available, open to offers so please ring. £2500Oundle , tel: 07932999342

EXCELSIOR TALISMAN TWIN
1951, For sale as a project, it is 95% complete, only missing the bolts to put it together and a seat, asking for £1,500. £1500Uk, tel:07729060348

FRANCIS-BARNETT 9
1956, Francis Barnet Trials. £2750Bridlington, tel: 07816561852

FRANCIS-BARNETT 9
1956, Rare Francis Barnet Scrambler. £2750Bridlington, tel: 07816561852

FRANCIS-BARNETT 9
1957, Francis 197 trials bike, not road registered, complete runner, good tyres, new coil fitted. £1000Somerset, tel: 07511103496

FRANCIS-BARNETT PLOVER
1954, In good condition, runs and rides, last MoT 2019. £1595Uk, tel:07831579854

FRANCIS-BARNETT PLOVER
1954, In good condition, runs and rides, last MoT 2019. £1395Uk, tel:07831579854

HARLEY DAVIDSON FL
1957, Original, unrestored, two short videos on YouTube show running and riding search Harley police bike 1957. £35000Hampshire, tel: 07717834262

HARLEY DAVIDSON FL
1957, Ex Vietnamese president escort bike, runs and rides superb, oil tight, just serviced with new manifold seals and clamps, headstock bearings and wheel bearings, very original bike. £30000Northampton, tel: 07732335888

HONDA 125
1976, Honda 125 Trials, running order, good project. £1000Bridlington, tel: 07816561852

HONDA 650RC
1988, 6000 Sibling of the legendary RC30, all in good running order, comes with current MoT. £0Uk, tel: 07976260044

HONDA 750/4
1972, Very good condition throughout and on the road, stainless exhaust. £5000Lancashire, tel: 07884935589

HONDA CB200
1981, Plus lots of spares eg: engine, frame, wheels, winter project. £300West Yorkshire, tel: 01484663007

HONDA CB250
1982, 6800 Bike in reasonable condition, been dry stored for last 10 years after complete strip and rebuild, bike has had 13 previous owners. £600Herefordshire, tel: 07391048529

HONDA CB650F
1980, 3100 Registered historic vehicle, sympathetic resto, new startor/rotor/voltage/regulator, Hagon shocks, chrome good condition, good paint work, priced to sell. £500Sussex, tel: 01293521328

HONDA CB72
1963, 1900 Imported from Japan in 2018 and stored until 2022 when I bought it from Car and Classic auction, I have replaced parts as needed, I can give a full list online. £3950Staffordshire, tel:07969478716

HONDA CB72
1963, 1900 Imported from Japan in 2018 and stored for 4 years when I bought in 2022 from Car and Classic auction, since then a lot of parts renewed & refurbished I have V5. £3950Staffordshire, tel:07969478716

HONDA CB750
1977, Excellent condition throughout, new tyres, new chain and sprockets, all the chrome work is very good including the exhausts. MoT exempt, rides lovely, viewing welcome. £0Northampton, tel:07715027344

HONDA CB750
1983, 43682 miles, Good condition, MoT 2025, new clutch and rear tyre, original condition, factory spec, handbook, reduced price for quick sale. £1900Leicester, tel:07831429283

HONDA SL125
1974, Black and Silver, rebuilt using parts from other Honda bikes, new parts including 125 Lifan push rod engine. £1750Wiltshire, tel:07512319261

HONDA VFR750
1986, 31865 miles, Mint condition, genuine bike, comes with Krauser panniers, I have owned the bike for 32 years. £2000Tayside, tel:01796481507

HONDA VT700
1986, 3300 12 months MoT, new battery and front tyre, disc pads fitted, stored well and looks excellent. £1000Manchester, tel: 07714441006

HONDA Z50 MONKEY
1969, Now total restoration, MoT and road legal, UK registered historic vehicle, only 120 interesting history, great fun for the grand children. £3300Leicester, tel:01162414841

KAWASAKI 90
1975, 600 Kawasaki 100 Sport, very rare, 50 years old, all original, even tyres, one owner, never had a MoT, V5 in my name, been recommissioned, runs and rides like you would expect, may p/ex Mini/Escort. £2795Merseyside, tel: 07398067037

KAWASAKI GPZ 550
1986, 31348 miles, New coils, tyres good front and rear Motad exhaust, all good. £1200Leeds , tel:07973424116

KAWASAKI GPZ 750
1983, 6500 Refurbed front and rear master cylinders and calipers, new bearings in Unitrak/wheels and swinging arm, LCD dash works ok, new tyres, fair condition and good runner, tax and test free. £2800Derbyshire, tel: 07771718689

KAWASAKI Z1000
1979, 5200 UK model, tax and MoT exempt, Dyna ignition and coils, Kenny Harman cams fitted, Harris exhaust, slight oil leak on head, use as is or could do with a bit of TLC, spares available. £5000Derbyshire, tel:07771718689

MZ TROPHY
1973, 2838 In excellent condition, starts and runs easily, in cold weather as well, free delivery is available in UK. £2500Lancashire, tel: 07833351507

SUNBEAM S7
1950, Mist Green, lots of history/ receipts, rebuilt less than 500 miles ago, s/s exhaust, new carb, valves, pistons, re-bore etc, needs re-commissioning. £6750High Wycombe, tel:07710004142

KAWASAKI KH400
1976, 2380 Fully recommissioned, recent nut and bolt restoration, truly wonderful, must be seen, can be viewed running, please call for further information. £7995South East, tel:07973218796

KAWASAKI W650
2001, 1198 Reworked to resemble a BSA Gold Star, great looking bike with an electric starter, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk, GBP 0Kent, tel: 07769 970559

LEVIS A2
1931, I have owned this bike since 2014, starts easy hand change then foot change, new gearbox casing, I am selling off my bikes after serious road accident, runs well. £6150Preston, tel:07751260056

NORTON 16H
1938, Recent extensive restoration with many new parts, original registration and matching numbers. Beautiful looking bike, runs very well, easy starter. £7250West Yorkshire, tel:07940376082

TRIUMPH 3TA
1962, Please call. £2950Swansea, tel:07889763699

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A Honda Suzuki Yamaha 2 stroke wanted any condition also a small British bike up to 500cc again in any condition good price paid call Ken.
TEL: 07398052043 UK

CLASSIC BIKE
A classic motorcycle wanted for my recently retired father consider anything in any condition British or Japanese good price paid we can collect.
Tel: 01514470147 UK

VARIOUS
Any classic motorcycle wanted by genuine enthusiast from a BSA to a Villiers any make/ model/condition/price top price paid call Jack.
Tel: 01514470147 UK

VARIOUS
Harley Davidson sidecar body 1936 upwards for big twin seats screen Leaf springs spare wheel carrier mudguard sidecar cover no chassis, £3500, firm original exchange outfit. Tel: 07863262603 / 02085341761 London

VARIOUS
Ducati 1980 GTS 900cc seat £225 headlight brackets chrome £125 Harley Davidson sidecar body, 1928 upwards original seats cover exchange outfit on road, no chassis. Tel: 07863262603 or 02085341761 London.

HARLEY TOOL BOX
Harley 45 original toolbox may fit other Harleys 1940s or 1950s in black signs of old chrome under paint use as it is or strip back to original chrome £95 Firm plus post or pick up free in London.
Tel: 07863262603 UK

VARIOUS
Classic British pair of Shocks new old stock might fit pre unit Triumph £95 firm plus post or free pickup in London 07863262603 London

VARIOUS
Volkswagen 1981 camper air cooled Mott/tax exempt history good runner exchange old vee twin Combo on road. Tel: 07863262603 or 02085341761 London.

VARIOUS
Triumph 6t bathtub Thunderbird 1961 with Double Adult Watsonian busman sidecar with 12v battery in sidecar Boot with door sidecar very nice condition tax and mot exempt has 1 years Mot to 2025 very rare to comer across now days £12995 may part ex combo or classic motorbike or may sell sidecar body sidecar very nice condition. Tel: 07863262603 or 02085341761 East London.

MOTORCYCLE WANTED
A classic motorcycle wanted by enthusiast in any condition.
Tel: 07811189755 UK

WANTED
Brough Superior 11-50 parts wanted. Tel: 07811189755 UK

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VARIOUS
MV & HRD books, MPHS, badges, mag articles, 750S mini champ £150. 98MV rally hat £20. Sheen t-shirt, book, posters £30. B Lomas signed CB show guide 85/81, £20, leather jacket medium £30 swap Hifi items, vinyl, tapes etc.
Tel : 01277200530 UK

VARIOUS
WTD jackets Belstaff, Trailmaster, D Lewis, lightning 38-40 T-shirts, Heuer, AGV, Assen etc 60-70's. Torque wrenches, Bachco 811, Handitorq 200 £35 each, battery charger, Nexpeak, new £30, Astro A1 tyre pump, new £35, m/c outfit/car cover £10, swap Hifi item. Tel : 01277200530 UK

VARIOUS
Complete electric start conversion for Ducati 750 round case engine. All genuine Ducati parts, ready to fit, includes battery leads. All in good working order. £500.
Tel: 07474719480 UK

VARIOUS
Old sidecar light £20 post free.
Tel: 0786 3262603 East London

VARIOUS
Leather sheepskin Brown flying Jacket very heavy Large to ex Large as new £450 quick sale buy for winter cost over £1200 to buy same as Irvin.
Tel : 07448733603 East London

MATCHLESS G12
1961, 4800 3 owners, recently refurbished with new bars and controls, plus top end rebuild. Ready to be enjoyed. £5000Norfolk, tel:01953887326

NORTON COMMANDO
1969, Matching numbers. Complete rebuild. Primary belt drive, electronic ignition, new carbs, Hagon shocks, stainless spokes and rims, new tyres and chain. Datatag. Not an import. OVNO. £9250Devon, tel:01884251508

TRIUMPH 650
1961, With double adult Watsonian Busmar sidecar, 12v battery in sidecar boot with door and sunroof, tax and MoT exempt, with new MoT to 2025, may part ex classic motorbike with or without sidecar. £12995East London, tel:07863262603

MATCHLESS G12
1961, 4800 Very presentable, 3 owners from new, recently been refurbished with top end rebuild and new bars and controls, not been a restoration but just a tidy up and refresh. £5000Norfolk, tel: 01953887326

NORTON COMMANDO
1974, Complete rebuild, Hagon shocks, Boyer ignition, PW3 cam, 32mm Mk2 Amal's, disc rear brake, RGM clocks, £8500. £8500East Sussex, tel: 07552146295

TRIUMPH T140 BONNEVILLE
1973, Matching numbers, good overall condition and good runner, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk, £7250Kent, tel: 07769 970559

MATCHLESS G3L
1955, Well presented, classic, previous longterm ownership, offered from my private collection, photos, V5C, ready to ride, free delivery arranged. £3500Scarborough, tel:01723372219

NORTON DOMINATOR
1955, Wideline, alloy rims, new tyres, battery, silencers, electronic ignition, T/L/S brake, photos, V5C, free delivery. £5950Scarborough, tel: 01723372219

TRIUMPH TIGER 750CC
1978, Much restoration work completed including engine, great example, more details and photos at www.anthonygodin.co.uk, £ £6495Kent, tel: 07769 970559

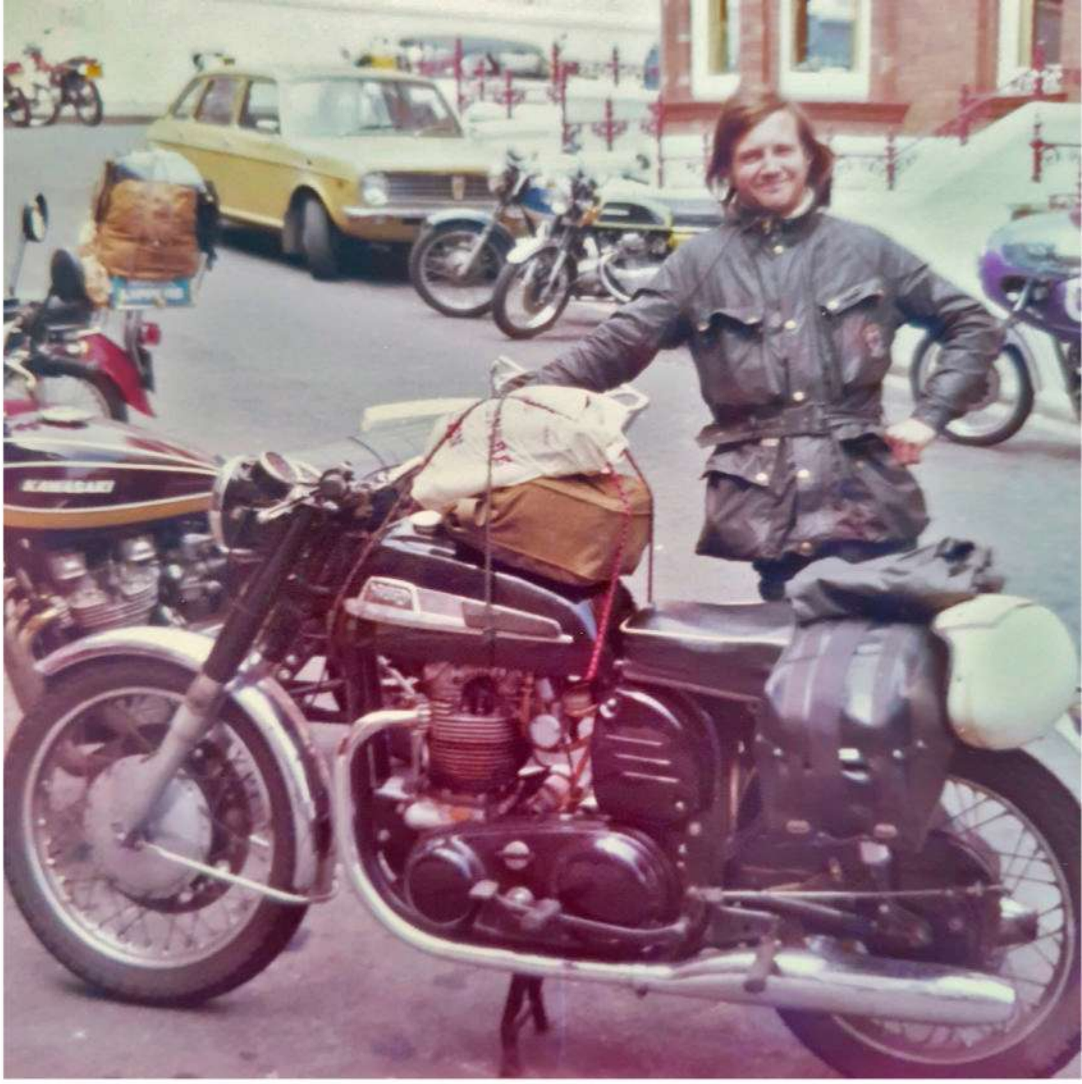
MOTO GUZZI V50
1984, UK Registered 1997, MoT to May 25. New switches, tyres, electronic regulator, starter motor, ONO. £3000Nottingham, tel:07535332156

SUNBEAM LION
1933, Unrestored, original transferable number, Lucas battery, Dunlop tyres, Dunlop tyre pump, YouTube video search, unrestored Sunbeam Lion, 600, 1933. £7500Hampshire, tel:07717834262

YAMAHA XJ900 DIVERSION
1999, 1500 miles, under 15000 miles, dry stored last 6 years, good original condition, new battery, fork seals and oil, carbs cleaned and new oil filter.Scottish Borders, tel: 07792 484640

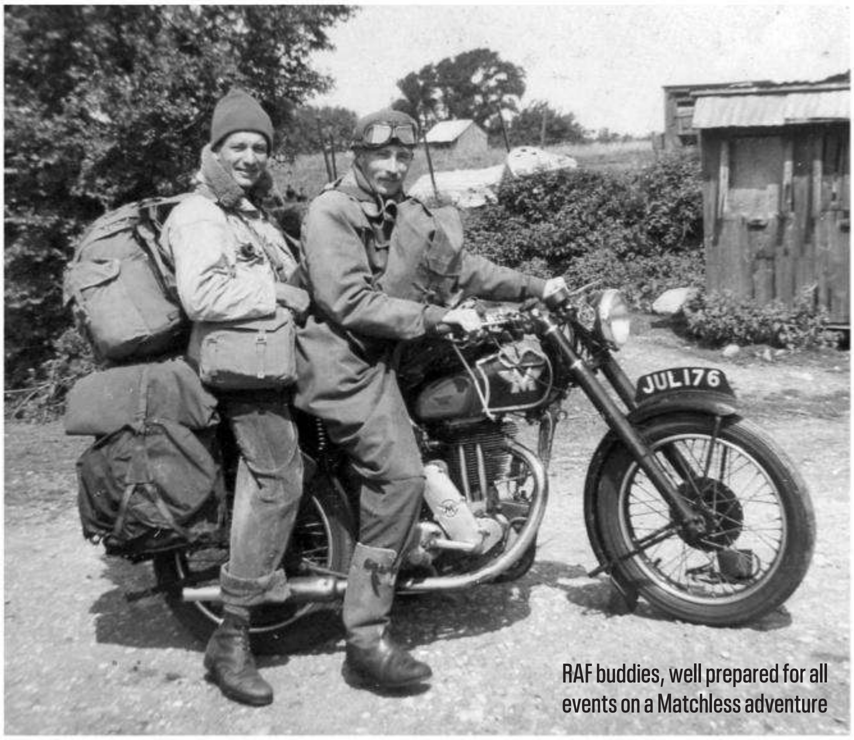
Taking it to the Maxi

This photograph is from 1977, taken on my first visit to the Isle of Man. I travelled up there on the Domi 650SS with my mate Steve, who had broken his arm badly not long before. I picked him up from Nuneaton in Warwickshire, and we rode up there with him on the pillion, with his plastered arm inside his leather jacket. It rained all the way – and most of the time on the island – so it was a soggy trip! I kept the bike for 19 years, writing it off once and then rebuilding it better. Is 438 BEL still out there?
Paul Barfoot, Windsor



RIGHT Paul all smiles on his first excursion to the Isle of Man, during a rare break in the rampant rain

PAUL BARFOOT



RAF buddies, well prepared for all events on a Matchless adventure

MATT JARRETT

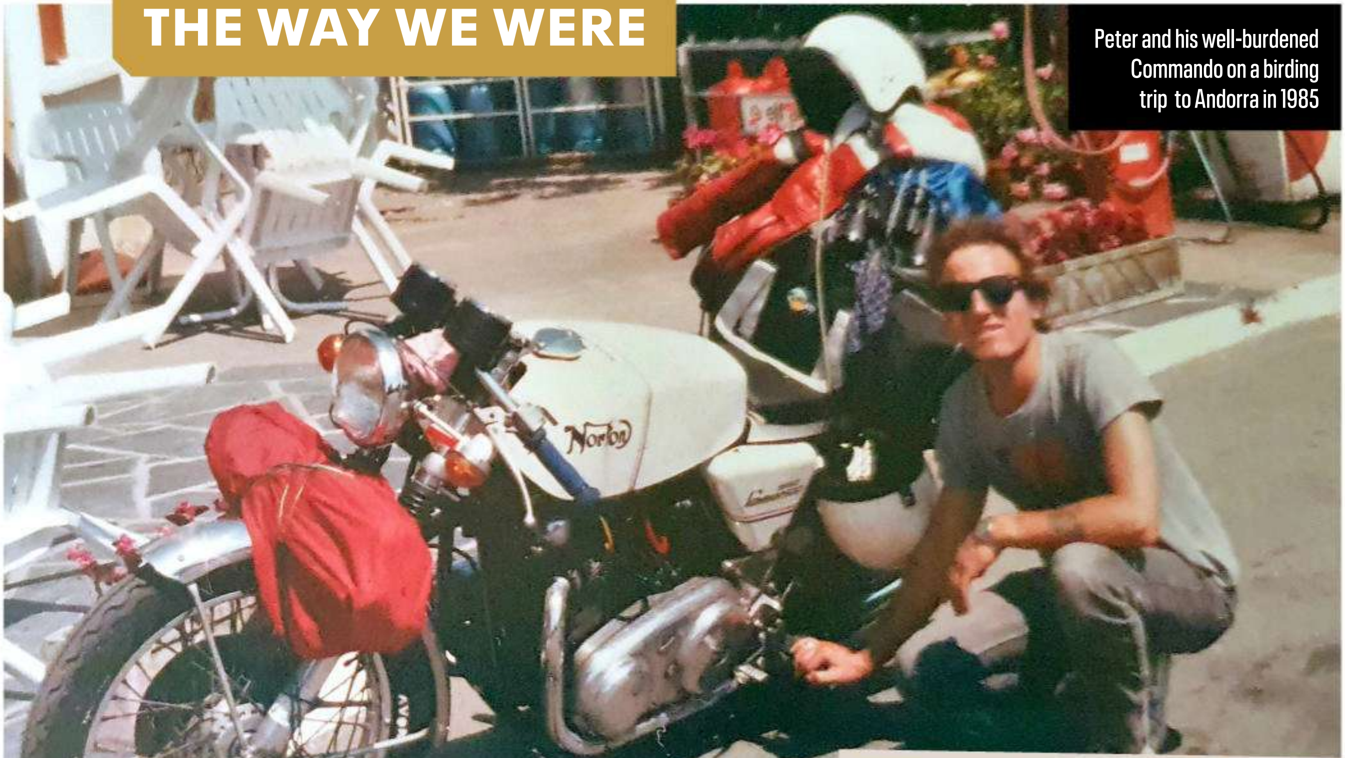
Army surplus

This photo is of my great uncle Denis Baxter and his Canadian mate, Fred Viera. It was taken sometime in the late 1940s/early '50s on Denis's Matchless G3L, somewhere in Essex, when they were clearly off on an adventure. My cousin Sarah thinks the bike was ex-WD; the riding kit and luggage certainly are.

Denis met Fred during RAF service on an earlier adventure, when he was piloting and Fred navigating B24 Liberators in and around India and Burma. This included flying over the Eastern Himalayas, delivering supplies into China (the air crew casualty rate for these trips was horrific). Denis maintained his RAF interest and was actively involved in air crew reunions. He stayed interested in bikes – modified by my formidable great aunt Mair – and latterly pottered around on a Yamaha stepthru, complete with tartan panniers. I remember failing to frighten him when he rode pillion on my Suzuki Bandit. He was a splendid man.
Matt Jarrett, Basingstoke

SHOW US YOUR PHOTOS

Got a photo from back in the day of you showing off your bike? Tell us the story behind it... who you are with, when and where it was taken, and – most importantly – what are your memories of the bike(s) pictured? Share it with CB readers by sending a decent-quality scanned image by email to the address: **classic.bike@bauermedia.co.uk**



Peter and his well-burdened Commando on a birding trip to Andorra in 1985

PETER WALLER

Fully loaded

In the days before bespoke motorcycle luggage, you had to improvise...

This photo with me and my heavily overloaded Norton Commando was taken in Andorra on my way south across the Pyrenees into Spain in 1985 – it was a fantastic trip, living wild and free, sleeping under the stars and riding to wilderness places looking for rare birds.

I was lucky to have got into bikes in the early 1970s – a time when I saw the first Honda 750 four join our little group of bikes. What a magical thing it was – but it couldn't keep up with my first Norton Commando – the 850 shown poking out of the garage next to my BSA A10 Chopper in the other photo, which was taken in 1976. As you can see, my poor parents' garage was a no-go area for them!

I had some lucky escapes in those days. At the time the chopper picture was taken, I was 17, with obligatory long hair and Black Sabbath T-shirt. The bike had a converted Mini wheel at the back, along with coffin tank and chopper pot pipes. Unfortunately, my poor parents, who were in despair with me, said it had to be sold to help with the payments on the Norton. Then, with some lads on their way over from Swansea to buy the bike, I decided on one last ride out...

Off we went down the lanes, with no insurance. I opened her up on a straight... but when the time came to slow down, I found the throttle had jammed. There was no key to switch off the engine, so I pulled off the plug caps and stamped on the footbrake – a home-made affair mounted on the frame tubes – and the whole lot fell off. Now in a panic, I shoved my '70s cowboy boots with leather soles to the ground, trying in vain to slow down, but they rapidly burnt through.

At the end of the straight was a 90° bend and a wooden five-bar gate into a farmer's field, which I promptly crashed into. The bike landed on top of me; my friend who was riding behind me on his brand new Kawasaki 250 triple didn't even put his bike on the stand – he just dropped it and ran over to me! Luckily, I was unhurt, but the bike was a write off. Needless to say, my dad was most upset – and the people who turned up to see the bike weren't interested in buying the crumpled mess.

I still ride a 1970s Commando and an early '70s big twin Harley. I love it every time I walk into my garage and see them sat there – it takes me back to the carefree and careless times of my youth in the beloved 1970s. **Peter Waller**

US INFO • Classic Bike, ISSN 0142-890X (USPS 706770) is published monthly by H Bauer Publishing Ltd, The Lantern, 75 Hampstead Road, London NW1 2PL, United Kingdom. • The US annual subscription price is $89.51. Airfreight and mailing in the USA by agent named World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. • Periodicals postage paid at Brooklyn, NY 11256. • US Postmaster: Send address changes to Classic Bike, World Container Inc, 150-15, 183rd Street, Jamaica, NY 11413, USA. • Subscription records are maintained at Bauer Media, Subscriptions, CDS Global, Tower House, Sovereign Park, Lathkill Street, Market Harborough, Leicester LE16 9EF, United Kingdom. • Air Business Ltd is acting as our mailing agent.

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